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HERE WE ARE AGAIN

The author as he looks today.

HERE WE ARE AGAIN

Recollections *of an* Old Circus Clown

By

ROBERT EDMUND SHERWOOD

Backward, turn backward, O Time, in your flight!
Make me a child again, just for to-night!
—ELIZABETH AKERS ALLEN

ILLUSTRATED

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To

All the Young and Old Boys Who Carried
Water for the Elephant

FOREWORD

A WELL-KNOWN American writer once told me that of all his published works—and their name is legion—only one had been founded on fact, and that one the critics united in condemning as impossible and unnatural. In the case of this tale of the circus, I venture to forestall such criticism by solemnly stating that all the characters which appear in the pages following are real, and memory of them still dwells in the minds of many now living. No attempt has been made to employ high-sounding phrases in telling of these genial gentlemen with hearts of gold. The tale has its foundation in actual fact, and the history, as hereinafter set forth, is a plain narration of an actual experience, of the many episodes, stranger than fiction, which went to form the warp and woof of my early career. I sincerely hope it will be interesting to all my readers and especially to those gray-haired boys and girls who look back on the happiest days of their lives—those spent under a circus tent.

ROBERT E. (BOB) SHERWOOD.

INTRODUCTION

THAT which pleases long, and pleases many, must have merit. In this category the circus, as a distinctively American institution, may be properly listed.

There are probably few persons who do not number among the most enjoyable recollections of their youth, their initial visit to a circus, whether their first sniff of sawdust or tanbark was inhaled in a tent made classical by Phineas Taylor Barnum, or under the canvas canopies of Forepaugh or John Robinson.

In my boyhood days, the cry of "Hold yer hosses, the elephants are coming," produced a thrill such as no other slogan has been able to equal since. Although the days of the old one-ring circus have passed and gone, we look back upon them as the happiest of our life.

"Backward, turn backward, O Time, in your flight!
Make me a child again, just for to-night!"

Go back to the time when you stood awestruck, staring in open-mouthed wonder at the men decorating the barns and blacksmith shops with flaming posters of "The Blood Sweating Behemoth of Holy Writ," and "The Man Eating Royal Bengal Tigers." Gazing, spellbound, you then and there resolved to see that circus if you had to sell the family cook-stove or burglarize your savings bank, thus dissipating the hoardings of a lifetime.

Then came weeks of agonizing delay till the day of all days—circus day—rolled around. After a fitful night's sleep you stealthily sneaked down the back stairs, starting guiltily at every sound, in mental agony for fear the old folks would be aroused and you would be summarily sent back to bed, and later to school; *sans* breakfast, *sans* coat, *sans* shoes; with perhaps a stone bruise on either foot, your blue jeans trousers held up by a single suspender, and your shock of uncombed hair covered by a "straw pile" in a dilapidated condition, the result of having used it to fight bumblebees.

Clear of the house, with detection improbable, your flying feet carried you through the cool misty morning to the rendezvous, where you were joined by genial and adventuresome fellow-spirits.

First came the big pole and tent wagons, followed by the rumbling chariots with their gilded sides carefully covered with canvas; then the ponies drawing the Fairy Queen's Chariot, and last, joy of all joys, the big elephants, lumbering lazily along in the early morning light, each in charge of a mounted keeper.

Then the parade! From your coign of vantage on top of a pile of empty packing cases in front of the general store, you endured an agonizing hour of nervous expectancy, trembling with fear lest your truancy would be discovered, and you would be severely chastised and sent back to school. Not that you were afraid of being whipped, but to miss the parade would be nothing short of a calamity.

The chattering crowd was alert with expectancy. Seemingly every person of the country-side was standing on the walks along the line of march. There were young couples keeping company, he in sorrel shoes and radiant red necktie, she in polka-dot calico, set off with a pink sash. Surely Solomon and the Queen of Sheba were not arrayed as they. Present also was the local wag, who allowed there would be no *pre*-formance, as he heered the *gi*-raffe had ketched a sore throat and it had

took all the canvas to wrap up his neck. (That was an old wheeze of mine, as you shall hear.) Farmers too, were there, seated in democrat wagons, comparing the condition of crops and debating excitedly over the chances of Samuel J. Tilden and Rutherford B. Hayes for president. There, too, would be the local Shylock, Banker Jones. He could *always* be counted on to take in anything that was *free*. A frugal man was the banker; it was said he once followed for two miles a robin which had committed the heinous offense of stealing two cherries from one of his heavily laden trees—followed it all that way without getting a shot at it. The only thing the banker gained was a heavy perspiration and the sobriquet for life of Cock Robin Jones.

If you were a normal boy, what an impression that parade made on you,—the blare of trumpets, the richly caparisoned horses and ponies, the beautiful ladies, the funny clowns! You admired and commented on everything, clear down the line to the last elephant, rented for publicity purposes to the local druggist whose banner admonished you to

"Take Patterson's Prize Pills,
They cure all ills
And save the doctor's bills."

What boy was there who, though he might have seen them all often before, did not follow with sparkling eyes the Pawnee chief in his rapid ride on a barebacked steed—the lady in scarlet coat and high hat, who leaped her horse over high hurdles—the fat farmer, who, while his swift steed bore him rapidly round the ring, divested himself of any number of coats and vests, until he finally appeared resplendent in tights and trunks—the juggler who played at cup and ball and tossing knives in endless variety as he gracefully gyrated around the arena!

Which of us has not, in the days of our callow youth, fallen desperately in love with the ravishingly beautiful young equestrienne in abbreviated skirts who leaped through "balloons" and over broad silken banners? Even when we have attained man's estate of sophistication and become worldly wise, we take our children to the circus and enjoy as much as they the time-honored feats of equitation, the tumbling and leaping, the gymnastics.

How many can remember the old clown who jumped into the ring, crowed like a rooster and shouted "Here we are again"?

And the performers—the riders, the gymnasts

of a generation ago—what of them? Who can tell us of life as it was lived among the great brotherhood of dots and spangles? I can, thank heaven, for a part of it I was! And it is for children from seven to seventy that these reminiscences of eighteen years in the old one-ring circus are written, in the fervent hope that the recollection of the scenes of happy childhood may add a few enjoyable moments to the life of seventy and that the story of those gay and colorful days may prove interesting to the glowing eyes of seven.

The reader is assured that what follows is founded on truth, set down without embellishment or elaboration. Excepting for the portions based on authentic accounts of the history of the circus which transpired before my activities began, all the matter has been taken from my diary and date-books, which I faithfully kept, and of which I have managed by hook or crook to retain possession during all the vicissitudes of life.

R. E. S.

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HERE WE ARE AGAIN

CHAPTER I

I RUN AWAY TO JOIN THE CIRCUS

SOME men are born great, some achieve greatness, others have greatness thrust upon them"; still others are born in the state of Ohio, the birthplace of many of our presidents—and also the birthplace of others less prominent.

I was born in the state of Ohio. It did not seem humanly possible, however, considering my humble birth, that I would ever overcome the obstacles placed in the path of persons who aspire to the office of chief executive of this great nation. As I had no urge to become a minor statesman, I ran away with the circus as a sort of compromise

with Fate, or whatever it is that dominates the destiny of boys of fourteen.

Recalling the situation now, I can't remember having ever had a desire to live in the White House. I had heard in a vague sort of way that President Grant smoked as many as a dozen twenty-five-cent cigars in one day. As even Wheeling stogies made me deathly sick, you will understand why I did not crave the president's job—the circus seemed the only alternative—so the circus it was.

At the time of my sudden departure with the white tops, it did not strike me as anything unusual, nor did I devote much thought in preparation for the event. If I wavered, once the idea had occurred to me, the thought of the chores, the hundred and one manual tasks a boy on a farm is called on to do, strengthened my determination.

In addition to my regular home duties, I hired out to a neighbor to care for his horses, cows and chickens twice a day for the sum of a dollar and a half a week. With this amount I was supposed to clothe myself and have spending money as well. Previous to the time that I took the extra job, I can not recall ever owning a suit of clothes that had not previously belonged to some one else. This did

not worry me so much as the fact that I was too often mistaken, at a distance, for the original owner,—which often led to complications.

On the morning of the arrival of the circus, I had been sent to town to sell some cherries that were wrapped in a neat white cloth.

I had received strict instructions not to *idle* my time away waiting for the parade, but to return immediately as I was needed to help weed the garden. Being ordered to weed the garden on circus day was enough to settle the question of my future past all hesitation.

Seemingly, there was no better place to sell those cherries than on the circus ground. At least that was the spot uppermost in my thoughts, so down to the lot I went, standing around in open-mouthed wonder at the sights, forgetting all about the cherries until the crowd commenced to go in to the performance. Until that time the thought of going *inside* the tent had not entered my head; now it seemed that there was nothing I wanted to do in life more than to go to that circus. Desire gave me courage. Approaching a rough-looking fellow in charge of a refreshment stand, I timidly inquired if he would like to add some cherries to his stock.

"Sure," he replied, "how much do you want for them?"

"Well," I said diffidently, "I usually get ten cents a quart. But if you will give me two shinplasters for the whole lot" (I had about three gallons) "and a ticket to the circus, I'll let you have them."

"Sorry, my little chap, but I can't do that," he said. "I can give you the money, but I'm all out of passes."

"All right, Ike," said a big raw-boned man who was standing near and overheard our bargaining. "You give him the quarter and I'll see that he gets in the show."

"Very good, Dan; whatever you say goes with me," said the vender.

After delivering the cherries and receiving my shinplasters, I took the hand of Dan Rice, the clown (I did not know it then) and was led around past the horse tents and through the performers' entrance into the circus.

On the way he asked my name, my age, and adroitly led up to inquiring how I should like to join the circus. I told him it was my greatest wish, but I did not know how to go about it.

"Well," he said, "I can help you. The apprentice boy that I've had for two years joined another circus last week as a performer, and I need another likely boy, and I think you will suit. Come round to my dressing tent after the night show, and I'll fix you up."

After the performance I went home and sneaked up the back stairs, without meeting any one. Hastily gathering my meager belongings, I tied them up in the cloth in which I had carried the cherries and dropped them out the window into the yard.

That night after the show was over I appeared promptly at Rice's dressing tent, and when the circus left the lot for the next town, I was rolled up in a piece of canvas on top of a cage wagon. The route out of town led past my home, and I was in a cold sweat through fear that my absence had been noted and the wagons would be searched. I could have saved myself the anxiety; being number eight in a poor family, I was not even missed. I sat up to take one last long look at the twinkling light shining from the window in the old brick house. When the brow of the hill shut off my view, I confess that I had a sinking sensation

around my heart. I am not ashamed to say that the tears trickled down my cheeks.

Many years passed before I again saw the old home. Great changes had taken place, and there was no one left with authority to forbid my coming and going as I chose.

To my dying hour, I shall never forget my first day as a member of the circus. How it did rain! Jupiter Pluvius and all his helpers seemed to be on the job. The water came down in torrents, until the entire lot looked like a lake. Returning from the parade, several of the big wagons mired down the instant they left the roadway, and the elephants had to push them out. Ditches had to be dug around the side-wall in order to prevent the interior of the tents from being flooded.

Needless to say, I was homesick. I had to fight hard to keep from taking the back trail, and I would have done so, but for the fact that all the money I possessed was the two shinplasters I had got for the cherries. The sun came out after the day performance and things took on a more cheerful aspect.

A recital of my experience while training for an acrobatic clown has no place in this story. My

(Left to right) Bob Sherwood at nine years; Frank Lacardo, and Japanese Tommy. Copy of a daguerreotype made in 1867, when the author was apprenticed to Dan Rice.

George L. Fox, the great pantomimist. The best buffoon of his time.

lot was not different from that of hundreds of gymnasts who have traveled the same road. I got no more than the usual number of bumps and bruises. Dan Rice, like every one else on the show, was uniformly kind and patient, and took pleasure in lightening my tasks whenever it was possible. By fall of that year I was competent to take my part in all the company acts.

Life with a circus of that period was no downy couch of ease. No one outside the profession can conceive of the many hardships that fell to the lot of performers. There were no sleeping accommodations other than jolting wagons; a piece of canvas to shed the rain was the only covering. Often I awoke in the morning to learn it had rained heavily while we were en route, and yet I had slept soundly with the rain falling in my face. Mention is made of this incident to show what a strong boy could go through and retain his health.

Then there was always present the opposition of the church—both ministers and laymen. The "immorality" of the circus was the usual text for a sermon immediately after the show was billed to appear.

Rough, uncouth and sometimes profane the

performers were, but in all my years with the circus, I can not now recall any case of a lewd man or woman. Morality prevailed to the highest degree. The nature of the profession made clean living a paramount necessity. Mutual respect was unfailingly exhibited between the sexes. When occasion permitted, not a few performers made a practise of going to church.

We who see the tolerant attitude of the church to-day toward the circus, can not conceive of the narrow view-point of these evangelical bodies two generations ago.

One Saturday night while performing in a small town, one of our star equestriennes fell from her horse and was severely trampled and bruised. We carried her, limp and unconscious, to a near-by house, which, as ill-luck would have it, was occupied by a minister of one of the local churches. In an abrupt and inhuman manner he ordered us to "take that fallen woman from his door-step" and slammed the door in our faces. That "fallen woman" afterward became the mother of one of the shrewdest lawyers in the United States.

The following Sunday I went to church. We did not travel on that day, as the proprietors were

waiting to learn the extent of our rider's injury. By a queer coincidence I unknowingly picked out the church presided over by the minister who refused us assistance the night before. His text was on baptism. I shall never forget that sermon. During his discourse he blatantly declared there were babies in hell not a span long because they had died before being baptized.

The feuds between local roughs and canvasmen seemed to be inherent and everlasting. In practically every town a fight between these factions was almost sure to be started.

Usually the local belligerents got the worst of these sanguinary encounters. Through long experience the circus men acquired a proficiency in the art of rough and tumble fighting not shared by the town talent.

Out of sheer necessity they had to be organized. At the cry of "Hey, Rube," the battle slogan of the razorbacks (the name by which canvasmen are known) every man quickly tied a white handkerchief around his neck; by so doing he avoided hitting a brother in the dark, and also lessened the chances of being himself hit by a friend.

Although never the aggressors, they were

usually arrested for assault and battery. Many thousands of dollars were paid in fines by circus proprietors in the course of a season.

Circus people are the most superstitious people in the universe, unless, perhaps, we may except sailors. Go down through the dressing tent of acrobats and riders, and you will rarely find a trunk without a horseshoe nailed on it. They are always affixed with the calks or ends pointing upward. If reversed, the circus folk claim the luck all runs out. Many possess charms mounted in costly settings supposed to ward off every evil. To see a white horse and no red-haired woman is considered the height of good luck; so also is it to see a funeral on the arrival of the show in town. Touching a humpbacked person, white specks on the fingernails, and foam on a cup of coffee, all these things have a meaning to them.

CHAPTER II

CIRCUS HISTORY

THE first circus in the United States was opened in 1780. Definite information as to its organization is now of course unattainable; but, if reproduced at this day, and put in contrast with the enormous circuses now competing for public favor, it would doubtless be considered a very small affair. Such as it was, however, General Washington and his staff patronized its performances in Philadelphia, and it was deemed quite a high-toned amusement for that city in 1780.

Two or three years later a Frenchman named Boschard organized a circus. His success encouraged rivals, and several circus companies sprang up between 1838 and 1861. It is doubtful, however, if all combined would have made up a

show as big as Barnum's in 1879, or if their expenses and receipts during the forty years between 1780 and 1820 would have figured as large a total as those of any one of a dozen circuses of the present time for a single season.

Few people have any idea how very crude a thing the American circus was even as late as 1850. At that time nine horses and seven men constituted a full troupe. The band was made up of a hurdy-gurdy, a clarinet and a bass drum; there was no roof to the ring enclosure; the largest posters were approximately sixteen by forty-four inches, and their pictorial ornamentation was confined to a rude wood-cut about six inches square, in the center of the sheet, painted in black. Performances were rarely given at night, except in the very largest towns, where means for feebly illuminating the ring with candles could be improvised.

Gipsy-like, the circus men of that day went from place to place by night, moving altogether by wagon, often at break of day startling early-arisen villagers into joyous expectation by their white canvas fence; waking the echoes with the shrill notes of a solitary trumpet that proclaimed the show had come to town; infusing unwonted ex-

citement into all human and animal life in the vicinity of their wondrous performances during the afternoon and evening; and with the shades of night folding their tent (only it wasn't a tent) like the Arab and quietly stealing away, to leave behind them, as a tangible reminder of vanished joys, the ring in the earth, where emulous boys would tumble and prance and scuffle, until rain, and sun, and frost had beaten it out of sight.

But there were things then for which the old circus men of to-day sigh in vain. The tavern-keeper's charges were only thirty-seven and a half cents a day for each man, and very often even that was remitted, the pleasure of the showman's company being accepted as compensation for his entertainment. There was no license to pay; no ground rent was demanded; one little poster was generally deemed sufficient for a town; costly trappings, costumes and paraphernalia were not expected or required; forage for the horses was cheap; newspapers were few, and did not expect column advertisements, while the percentage of "dead heads" in the audiences was exceedingly small. Merry days were those for the circus man!

In 1860 the new order of things began to be

inaugurated. Costly luxury made insidious inroads upon the primitive simplicity described. The mammoth show of Purdy, Welch and Company started out upon a scale of such magnificence as dwarfed all its predecessors and rivals. It boasted twenty-four gray horses, and it actually had a brass band of eight pieces—a thing unheard of until then—associated in the popular mind only with royalty, unbounded wealth and lavish prodigality. It also encouraged a new dignity on the part of performers. Prior to that time the duty of putting up the canvas used to devolve upon the accomplished artist who ground the hurdy-gurdy, the talented musician who manipulated the bass drum or the distinguished foreigner who blew the clarinet; while that inimitable humorist, the clown, assisted by the dignified ringmaster, the unequaled tumbler, the world-renowned equestrian or the courteous and enterprising manager had to wield shovels and rakes for making the ring and spreading the sawdust (whenever there was any to be spread).

After a time, however, canvasmen appeared on the scene to do all that rough work, which spared the delicacy of feeling of the various professional

artists. Then, too, the range of performances was increased to enable the maintenance of such Oriental splendor. A tent was substituted for the old-fashioned circus fence, in order that showers might no longer be actual calamities, and an arrangement was made for lighting it with candles on a frame about the center-pole, so that night performances might be given.

From that time on, improvements, new expenses and fresh attractions were constantly being added to the circus until it became what we see it to-day. The twenty-four horses of Purdy and Welch's and even the band and tent (wondrous in their day) appear very small now by contrast with such a show as that of Barnum and Bailey during the summer of 1923, in which there were six hundred men and women, two hundred eighty horses, and an enormous menagerie, the combined expenses of which reached nearly thirteen thousand five hundred dollars per diem. The poster printing alone for such a show costs more in a single season than the entire outfit of several old-time circuses. Barnum in 1879 had nearly seventy thousand dollars' worth of colored posters, some of them sixty-four-sheet bills, the

largest known,—each one just about a hundred and twenty-eight times as large as the poster which fulfilled the wildest desires of the showman of 1828.

If the shell of the circus nut has been more handsomely gilded, however, it does not follow that the kernel has been improved in proportion. On the contrary, if the judgment of some of the oldest circus men in the country may be taken as authority, there has been a marked decadence in the quality of ring sports and the excellence of ring performers in late years. At least four of the finest acts known in the ring have entirely passed away or been supplanted by other and inferior ones.

The running vault, by all the company, upon and over a free horse going at full speed in the ring, was one of these. Few if any exercises were better calculated to display grace and agility than the lady's vault, the gentleman's vault and the round-about vault, practised in this performance. C. Bacon, E. Darius and Cadwallader were famous in this specialty at one time. No company attempts it now.

The Spanish trampoline was another fine old-time act, which is seen no more. It was also a

company act, each member vaulting over a standing horse from a very high spring-board (technically known as a trampoline board) which was taken at a run from an inclined plane. Bob Lowery, the clown, had the reputation of being the best trampoline performer of his day.

The best leapers of those days were William Batchelor, Bob Stickney and John O'Brien. Levi J. North was a famous vaulter, who went over to England to compete with Price, esteemed the English champion. He beat Price, afterward took to riding, and it is mainly as an equestrian that he is remembered.

Still vaulting is another obsolete act. That consisted of backward free somersaults (to explain it easily to the non-professional) upon a small space marked out on a level springing board. The performer's skill was measured by his grace and by the number of times he could twirl himself around like a pin-wheel in the air. Some performers have claimed to do it one hundred times, but their claims are seldom allowed by experts. William O. Dale did succeed in doing it eighty-nine times successively, for I counted them, and Tom McFarland managed to reach seventy-eight. There is

probably not a single performer in the country to-day who could reach twenty-five times.

The fourth of the acts put away among the lost arts is the forming of pyramids by men—from seven to eleven in number—on horses in the ring, with flankers, as they might be called, of from four to eight men and boys on the sides to complete the tableau. This was not only a very difficult act, but a dangerous one, simple as it looked. The slightest movement of the horses upon which the pyramids were formed, or of the understanders (as the first row of men were termed) would inevitably spill all those who were above them, in every direction. There would be no possible chance for anybody to save himself in this general tumble, and added to this was the frequent danger of being trampled upon by the startled horses. Scarcely a performance of the pyramids went by without sprained ankles, bloody noses and contusions.

It will be observed that all these acts call for general ability among the company. Their success depends largely upon the excellence and uniformity of training. It is precisely in this respect that the system of organization of the circus of to-day is most widely different from that of the

olden time. A circus troupe is made up now largely of special performers, some of whom do brother acts, others tumbling, others bareback riding, others trapeze stunts, or something else for which they have been especially trained. In everything else except the one specialty selected by them they are mediocre, even poor.

Thus the troupe is made up of disintegrated parts, like a variety show. Well-done, important company acts are no longer practicable.

Old performers aver that this is not because of any change in the public taste, but a consequence of the abolition of the system of apprenticeships which once obtained.

It was formerly the custom for nearly all first-class performers to take boys as apprentices, who were bound to them for a stipulated length of time, during which they were taught leaping, vaulting, somersaulting, riding and everything else within the range of the teacher's ability. These boys were uniformly treated with kindness, were properly taught, and when they in their turn became performers, it was in a business for which they had a natural liking and a thorough knowledge.

Very few apprentices are taken now. The ranks are recruited from individual performers, who have learned their several small parts of the business in gymnasiums or private practise, without the beneficial experience of circus discipline. It is these crude and half-taught performers who bring discredit upon the old, kind-hearted and genuine circus men who do not really deserve it.

When pupils are now trained for the circus ring by systematic professionals, injuries are never inflicted. Even when learning to ride, an ingenious appliance, known as the mechanique, precludes the possibility of dangerous falls. The mechanique was invented by a man named Stokes, who brought out Ella Zoyara. It is simply a strongly braced arm standing out from the center-pole at right angles, and so arranged that it can easily be moved around the ring at any rate of speed desired. A rope is run through a little pulley at the extremity of this arm. At one end of this rope is a stout snap-hook which is fastened either to a belt around the pupil's waist or to a harness. It is something like a combination of suspender braces and belt, which some pupils prefer to wear. The other end of the rope is held by the teacher.

Thus prepared, the pupil is mounted on a "pad," or broad flat saddle and the horse is started moving around the ring. The rope dangles loosely overhead, while the pupil practises balancing, turning, jumping, etc. When somersaults are attempted it is drawn to one side by a thin attached line, to be out of the way. The quick eye of the teacher detects the danger when the pupil loses balance, stumbles, or seems about to fall, and his strong hand, pulling on the rope, swings the pupil in the air, then lets him down safely, while the horse goes galloping on. The Ella Zoyara to whom I have referred was a man, whose impersonation of an equestrienne created a sensation wherever he appeared.

Formerly the performer who owned his own horse was an exception to the general rule, and the animal so owned was either a trick horse or an especially fine one kept by some "star" bareback rider. Managers were expected to furnish horses, and even horses trained for two- and four-horse acts, so that a performer going from one troupe to another would always find animals ready for him to jump on, and could go before the public after a little practise in learning their gait and disposition.

To-day, the performer claiming to be first- or even second-class, who does not own his own horse, or several horses, is the exception to the rule. Dick Dockrell, for instance, had ten horses. He was a scene or dramatic rider; that is, he rode acts which involve changes of costume or impersonations of character, and in this line he was one of the best in the country. His wife, Mademoiselle Rivers, was probably the best and most daring female bareback rider in the world.

James Robinson, who was a dashing and finished bareback rider, had six finely-trained horses; Charlie Fish, who ranked next to him in this line, had four or five. The three Melville brothers had six horses for their several acts. Frank Melville was a very fine pad and George was a bareback rider. The list might be extended almost indefinitely. This was a gain in one respect to the general excellence of the profession, as it enabled performers to bring their horses not only into higher training for their special lines of business, but into more thorough accord and understanding with themselves, the importance of which was fully understood by all equestrians. The performers themselves, however, grumbled that their salaries

had not increased in proportion to this added expense for them and with the lightening of the burdens of the manager. They were only employed less than half the year, on an average, but during all the other portion they must maintain their horses and keep them in training at their own cost. Still they got very comfortable pay. James Robinson made two hundred dollars per week for himself alone, as well as four hundred and fifty dollars for himself and two boys. Charlie Fisk got about one hundred and fifty dollars; the Melville brothers, three hundred and fifty dollars; Dockrell and wife, three hundred dollars. These were, of course, the largest salaries for equestrians, who were the best paid persons in a circus below the grade of proprietor. It may be said, however, that the general pay of pad riders ran from ninety to one hundred dollars per week each, and of bareback riders from one hundred to two hundred dollars, according to their individual excellence and popularity and the necessities of the management. Compare these salaries with those drawn to-day by the Wirth or Hanaford families, each receiving nearly three thousand dollars per week.

The early-day circus began its program with a

grand entrée of all the performers, including the horses and elephants. Next came the leaps, or trampoline acts, said to have originated in Spain. Every athlete in the roster took part in this act, which was always a thriller to the audience.

A fifty-foot runway pitched at an angle of forty-five degrees was erected, down which the performer ran to a spring-board, one end of which rested on the ground, the other on a heavy wooden bar between two wooden horses. Down this narrow runway came the performers, struck the spring-board and vaulted over six to ten horses, the leap ending in a forward somersault. The act generally began with five horses, a horse being added for each round until the entire ten, with perhaps an elephant in the center, were led into line for the star performers, who completed the act by turning two somersaults over the entire number.

There were some good leapers in my day, but the man who first accomplished the double somersault, Sam Reinhardt, excelled them all. When it came time for the grand finale, Sam would take a majestic pose at the top of the runway, the ringmaster (called the equestrian director by circus people) would mount the ring bank and dramatically announce:

"L-a-d-i-e-s and *gent*lemen, your a-t-t-e-n-t-i-o-n is directed to Mr. Samuel Reinhardt, who will attempt the seemingly impossible feat of turning two separate and distinct somersaults over the backs of ten horses and one elephant. Five thousand dollars to any one in the world who can equal him. All eyes on Mr. Reinhardt."

Then came a long wait while the performer would motion that this or that horse in the line be moved an inch or so; finally after the audience had been worked up to fever pitch of excitement, the drummer began the long roll and down would go Sam, the bass drum giving a big boom as each somersault was made.

It was an act that never failed to draw vociferous applause. I sometimes wondered why some leaper did not call that five-thousand-dollar bluff; for, while Sam was the most graceful leaper in the company, there were others who could also accomplish it.

Making bluff claims without knowing who is in your audience is sometimes risky. I recall having once gone to hear a celebrated bass singer render that old classic, *Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep.* Just as he was finishing the last strains in a voice so deep that it seemed to come from under the

stage, and the audience was leaning forward ready to applaud, an old sailor in the audience took it up and carried it three notes lower.

It is much easier to manage a circus to-day than it was forty years ago.

You might suppose it would be the other way about, but that is not the case. Granted circuses to-day are bigger, they are not better. Excellence, individually and collectively, is seemingly not of importance, so long as the circus is overwhelmingly big,—so big that its press agents feature the amount of its daily expense, rather than the ability of its performers.

As material for publicity, the expense account is as important as the salary said to be paid a motion-picture actress. Both, as a rule, are grossly inflated for the purpose.

For the sake of comparison, let us take the difficulties encountered in moving from town to town one of the old-time shows of two generations ago. There were no electric lights, telephones or automobiles, no improved railroad equipment or wagon roads, usable at all seasons of the year.

Early spring rains meant impassable roads, detours and decreased attendance.

I have known occasions when it was necessary to go round twenty-five miles by turnpike, when it was only twelve miles to the next stop by dirt road. Add to these drawbacks, sick horses, fights with local roughs, high licenses and the overbearing opposition of the church, and you will have a fair mental picture of the difficulties which beset the old-time show.

To-day it is necessary only to evolve a system and trust to mechanical devices for the details of transportation. If horses get sick, there is always the automobile to tow the tents and trucks from the cars to the lot, or from the lot to the cars. If a wagon meets with an accident, en route between lot and car, the telephone brings help immediately.

Unlike the circus of the past, the circus of to-day draws a larger percentage of the people. The efficiency of the automobile has widened the field of patronage. And there is less opposition and belligerency on the part of religious sects, which have come to look upon traveling circus organizations as beneficial to the community at large.

All of these increased advantages have made it possible for to-day's circus to meet an increased expense account.

One of our large circus enterprises now faces a daily expense account of thirteen thousand five hundred dollars. This amount takes account of time lost in winter quarters, and includes repairs and renewals of equipment. Thirteen thousand five hundred adult persons must purchase tickets before the expenses for the day are paid. As the tent seats sixteen thousand two hundred and fifty people, and is usually filled twice daily, the venture is generally profitable.

Rainy weather, the Nemesis of the old one-ring circus, is now beneficial because rain prevents farm labor, while the automobile assures dry and rapid transportation to and from the water-proof pavilion.

Last season, this organization required to transport it, one hundred and four cars divided into five sections. With the first section goes the cook top, as the men must have breakfast before their labor begins. Next go the horse tops, followed by the parade wagons and chariots.

After the night audience has passed into the circus top, the menagerie is the scene of great activity. Cages are boarded up, tongues put into wagons and teams attached, and promptly at eight-fifteen

a shrill whistle is sounded; down goes the side-wall, and the whole menagerie, including the led animals, moves majestically toward the cars, to be followed later by the circus top and performers.

During the last decade many changes have come about in the operation of a circus. In no department have innovations been so pronounced as in the refreshment stands. About the only vended article which has not been changed or retired from sale is the plebeian peanut. Its popularity is perennial. A circus without peanuts is like strawberries without cream. Popcorn balls, gingerbread, and even the lowly lemonade, which was colored to a perfect pink, have long since disappeared. The balloons, whips and whistles, so pleasing to our parents when children, have so waned in popularity that their sale is negligible.

CHAPTER III

WEARING THE DOTS

CLOWNS as a class are, or should be, pantomimists. The better the pantomimist, the better the clown. At no place in clown pantomime should words be necessary to elucidate the points to be put over.

Exact mimicry or imitation of men's actions must be used to take the place of words.

In pantomime, the clown may mimic whom he chooses. He can delight his audience by carrying his mimicry to such a perfection that verbal explanation is superfluous.

His supreme opportunity lies in the creation of lines of progressive movement that imitate nothing, but are in themselves expressive of a state of feeling.

The sure test of pantomime is that you do not

miss the words; every pause, every facial expression, exists in relation to what comes before and after. The unity of gesture and poise should be a separate and integral part of the whole. Each gesticulation, posture or gyration should move in a modulated manner toward finality. Every movement or class of movements must be a center in itself and at the same time a part of the whole.

It requires long training to accomplish this desired result. Much of the fine pantomime portrayed by clowns in the period following the Civil War had been handed down from father to son for many generations; for example, the act of pretending to cover the lash of the ringmaster's whip to prevent being stung with it, was used by England's best loved clown, Grimaldi, while performing at Astley's in London, in the early part of the nineteenth century. Grimaldi passed it on to Irish Dan Rice, after whom our American Dan Rice was christened. Tony Denier, Johnny Patterson, George W. Adams and Al Miaco all used it in their day. It always got over.

No clown in my day made much of a hit unless he was capable of improvising or creating.

There were few if any better known clowns

than George L. Fox and Tony Denier, unless, perhaps, one may except one Joseph Grimaldi, the English clown, to whom must be given credit for the euphonious appellation of "Joey," the nickname of all clowns to this day. Grimaldi descended from a long line of court jesters; one of his ancestors is said to have been the official buffoon of the Virgin Queen Elizabeth. He even appeared at court on one occasion crowned with a red wig, very similar in shape and color to the hair of her Majesty. That is, if one may believe the biographer of Grimaldi.

George L. Fox, Tony Denier and George W. Adams were contemporaries, each appearing singly and jointly in pantomimic productions in the old Bowery Theater. The last appearance together of Denier and Fox was on the stage of Barnum's Museum, just before it burned for the final time. Although quite young then, I remember the hit they made in their act. Denier was supposed to kill Fox in a duel, to avenge a fancied insult, and then endeavor to conceal the body in an empty barrel. Try as he would, he was unable to hide the feet of the "corpse" so they could not be seen. Much perplexed, he laboriously contrived

to lay the body of Fox across the mouth of the barrel, and, turning his back, went into a deep study as to his next move. Fox then suddenly "jack-knifed" into the barrel, completely hiding himself.

Then began on the part of Denier a search for the body. Each time he backed up to the barrel, Fox reached out and grabbed him from behind, much to his consternation and fright and the amusement of the audience. The act ended in Fox rolling the barrel off the stage and Denier showing remorse for his deed by crying into a large handkerchief, from which a deluge of tears would fall from a big sponge which was concealed in the cloth.

Fox and Denier were standing one day on a bridge erected over Broadway at the intersection of Fulton Street. This bridge was built in 1868 so that pedestrians could cross Broadway without fear of being run down by the "congestion" of traffic at that point. It was then and still is a very busy corner. They were looking at the old Astor House, at that time the tallest building in the city. Fox hazarded the prediction that in less than fifty years buildings of fifteen stories would be built in New York. Denier ridiculed his statement by declaring that buildings of that height and weight

would sink in the ground before they could be built.

After their separation, Tony Denier produced the pantomime extravaganza of *Humpty Dumpty* and became the author of a number of books on gymnastics. For several years he maintained a school for acrobats—the first gymnasium of which we have any record. Denier died at the ripe old age of eighty-two. He passed his last days in penury and poverty in the alms house in Kingston, New York.

Records prove that most clowns live to a ripe old age. Dan Rice died in Long Branch, New Jersey, in 1892, at the age of eighty-four. He preserved his mentality and cheerfulness to the end. George L. Fox lived to seventy-nine years of age, and appeared professionally until he was seventy-five. Pete Conklin, the Shakespearian clown, retained his activity almost to the day of his death, which came on his eighty-first birthday.

Fox and Fanny Herring, the serio-comic, appeared one season on the same bill at Tony Pastor's Bowery Theater. During the engagement, Fox was taken suddenly ill one night, and Fanny volunteered to substitute for him in his act. She

was an exceedingly clever comedienne and imitator and felt herself thoroughly capable of imitating Fox, as she had studied his methods many times from the wings and often burlesqued him for the benefit of her fellow-performers. As Fox was the star on the bill and the major part of the audience attended the performance for the sole purpose of seeing him and him only, the manager readily gave his consent.

Miss Herring was unfortunate in having but one eye, a fact well known to patrons of the theater. The misfortune was not a handicap to her appearance as she was extremely clever in the art of make-up. She got along very nicely in the part. Seemingly no one in the audience detected the substitution. By some unknown means, however, the information spread out front that it was "the herring" and not Fox who was doing the pantomime. During the intermission some "gallery gods" sneaked out to a near-by grocer, bought several dozen smoked herrings, commonly called "blind robins," and gouged out one of the eyes. When Fanny next appeared in the character of Fox she was met with an avalanche of herrings. That ended her understudy of George L. Fox.

Of the clowns of that period, there remains Jules Torneur and myself. We seem good for many years yet; "Julie" is still actively engaged with the Barnum and Bailey show, but does no acrobatic work, although he appears in the ring twice a day throughout the season. On account of his wide acquaintance with performers and attachés, he is given the job of distributing the mail which comes in care of the circus. Mentally and physically he is sound as a dollar. Like all clowns he takes a keen interest in children.

Once each year, dressed in my old clown costume, I have found it my privilege and pleasure to lead from four to six hundred orphans from the Charity Bureau on Twenty-second Street, New York, to Madison Square Garden to see the circus. I always make up in Julie's dressing-room, take a taxi down to the Bureau, put the children on a long rope and take them to the Garden. When I leave on my mission old Jules never fails to say to me, "Now, Bob, be sure to lead them round on this side of the Garden so I can see them." And Jules is always there peeping out through the little round window which lights and ventilates clown alley.

He has several children of his own, and a num-

ber of grandchildren. The whole inside of the lid of his trunk—which he never fails to see when he glances in the tiny mirror, while making up his face—is tacked solid with their pictures, taken in progressive stages of their youth.

Johnny Patterson, the Irish clown, was the greatest singing artist of his time. Perched high on the top of the trampoline runway, his head almost touching the peak of the canvas, with the sloping middle piece for a sounding board, holding his comical little hat aloft, Johnny would sing his own compositions in a clear tenor, enhanced by a rich Irish brogue. A chord from the band, the first verse sung, then the chorus in waltz refrain:

"Is this Mr. Riley, can any one tell?
Is this Mr. Riley who keeps the hotel?
Is this Mr. Riley, we speak of so highly,
Upon me word, Riley, yer doin' damn well."

He never failed to win applause from his hearers. For an encore he usually sang another of his own compositions, also Irish:

"Oh, Bridget Donohue, I really do love you;
You take the name of Patterson, and I'll take Donohue."

Patterson was born in Ireland. He never went to school and could neither read nor write. He came to the United States in 1879, joining the Cooper and Bailey show. After several seasons he returned to Ireland, where he formed a partnership with Jimmie Kelly, with whom he played in a variety sketch. Shortly after Kelly died, Patterson married the widow. He was a good singer, an excellent jester, and full of original wit. He improvised all of his material. He died in 1889 under the circus tent, having refused to go to a hospital. With a desire to cheer him up, the physician who attended him said:

"Well, good-by, Johnny; I'll see you in the morning."

"Perhaps you will," said Johnny, "but, Doctor, will I see you?"

When the doctor came in the morning, Johnny was dead.

So strong was the animus of the church against circus people at that period, no minister could be found who was willing to preach poor Patterson's funeral sermon, and no cemetery would receive his body. In order to give him decent burial, we all chipped in and bought a piece of ground, in which

Johnny Patterson. The greatest of all Irish singing clowns, as he appeared while singing his famous Irish ditty, *Bridget Donohue.* From a photograph taken in 1884.

The author at the age of twenty-one years, at the time he made a hit singing his famous clown song, *Caroline*, afterward made popular by Miss Crabtree (Lotta).

all that was mortal of one of the best buffoons that ever donned the motley, was laid to rest, just as dawn was breaking. Pete Conklin, the clown, read the Episcopal Service for the dead, which I'm sure would not have pleased Johnny as he was a County Donegal man, of Roman Catholic faith. So passed, under the rays of the rising sun, a man who had made millions laugh, and whose rollicking rhymes were enjoyed by men, women and children of three continents.

Contemporary with Patterson was Al Miaco. I always admired his work. In pantomime, make-up and costume, I considered him beyond compare. He never overplayed his act and never failed to get his point over. He was also an excellent burlesquer. I recall that a star equestrienne we had with us one season absolutely refused to go on while he was in the ring, claiming that his comical burlesque of her act distracted the attention of the audience. I never knew Miaco to use any "props" but a tin whistle about a foot in length. The funny stunts he did with that whistle would make a wooden Indian laugh.

Dan Rice, my old instructor, is perhaps the best remembered clown in the history of the circus. He

first appeared in Galena, Illinois, in 1844, and became popular immediately. His real name was Daniel McLaren. His father nicknamed him "Dan Rice," after a famous Irish clown of that name. He died comparatively poor in Long Branch, New Jersey, on February 22, 1892. I do not recall him so much for his clown work, as he was too old for acrobatic stunts when he began to teach me. I remember him best for his ability to teach horses to perform tricks. He trained a number of horses, the best a white horse with small bay spots in his coat, resembling flea-bites. This animal was very highly educated and would compare favorably with the so-called high-school horses on exhibition to-day. His most successful trick was performed as follows:

Old Dan would mount him and say, "Be very careful, now, sir, remember General Grant is riding you," at which the old horse would canter easily around the ring. Suddenly, Dan would call out, "Now, Jeff Davis is riding you," when the horse would begin to plunge and kick and keep it up until told that General Grant was again riding him. When we were showing south of the Mason and Dixon line, the names were always reversed.

"Jeff Davis" was the signal for an easy canter, and "General Grant" for bucking. As a matter of fact any names would have sufficed, as he was taught to kick when the rider's heel was pressed gently against his flank and to canter when his mane was secretly grasped just in front of the saddle.

The old gray horse cost Dan Rice, on one occasion, the severest licking at the hands of an eighteen-year-old boy, I ever saw a man get. It was the custom in those days to stable the performing horses and led stock at the local livery stable, as they rested better when away from the annoyance of the crowd on the lot. A number of young farmer boys dropped into the local stable one day where the stock was quartered to look at the old trick horse, which was enjoying a well-earned rest between performances. They got him up on his feet just as Old Dan appeared in the doorway of the box stall. Uttering a howl of rage he ripped out an oath, grabbed the coat collar of the nearest boy, and shook him vigorously. Not being acquainted with the manner of circus men, and thinking his last hour had arrived, the boy resolved to sell his life as dearly as possible, and the way in which he administered punishment to that old hero

of many rough and tumble bouts, would make a prize-fighter turn green with envy. At the end of five minutes, Rice's clothing hung in shreds, and there was hardly a spot on his face that was not either bruised or bleeding. During the mêlée, Old Dan swallowed a big chew of tobacco, becoming so nauseated that he couldn't work for several days.

Dan Rice gave me my circus nom de plume of Petie, suggested no doubt, as he said, by the initials of Mr. Barnum—P. T.—who had placed me under his instructions. I remained Petie to the audience throughout my professional career.

My wife sometimes shoots it at me when I act a little kittenish, by reminding me that I am no longer Petie, but nearly seventy and the head of a family. There is some difference between my present weight of one hundred and ninety pounds and my weight of one hundred and twenty-five while I was performing as Petie. In other respects, I have altered but little.

There have been some big changes in circus performances in the past fifty years, made possible by better transportation facilities. The singing clowns have been supplanted by the producing clowns, who are permitted to carry several carloads of "properties" for their acts.

In my day, a peacock feather, an inflated bladder tied by a string to a long whipstock, or a tin whistle, was deemed sufficient equipment for any competent clown. With these articles, coupled with pantomime well thought out, he could, and did, create uproarious laughter and applause. It is a moot question whether or not the clowns of the present could accomplish anything with the same equipment. I think not; they are handicapped by lack of talent in pantomime. Then, too, the commercial spirit has crept into the profession of to-day which has gradually stifled the romance out of buffoonery. Mr. Barnum continuously held to a belief that a circus should radiate a measure of mystical Romance, and never failed to keep a good-looking clown or two just inside the main entrance to the menagerie top, where he was at once the center of a group of admiring youngsters on their entrance. It was my good fortune to fill that position for many seasons after I was incapacitated by injuries for acrobatic work. Even a child in arms never refused to come to me, nor was there a boy or girl afraid to shake my hand, as I feel sure they would have been had my make-up been as hideous as those of modern "Joeys."

Our professions in life sometimes lead us through strange byways. While appearing with Barnum's at Olympic Gardens in London, I made it a point to have in my repertoire of songs some fairy lullaby which would appeal to children. I was taking off my dots and make-up one night, when a fine-looking well-groomed man was ushered into the dressing-room top. After introducing himself, he diffidently asked if he could request a favor of me.

"Certainly," I said. "Go ahead, and if it is possible to grant it, I shall gladly do so."

Hesitatingly he said, "My little girl, an only child eight years of age, has been to the circus several times and was much impressed with your singing of that little lullaby. She has hummed it almost continuously since hearing it. Unfortunately, she was stricken with scarlet fever about ten days ago, and her life is hanging in the balance. She has been unable to sleep for the past three nights and this has weakened her very much.

"The physicians object to giving her an opiate, fearing she will never react. To-night she told her mother she felt sure she would sleep if she could hear you sing the little lullaby song. We wish to

leave no stone unturned to save her life. Will you not please go with me in my carriage which I have outside? I feel that it may bring the desired result. Money is no object—we will pay you any sum you may ask."

I told him I should go only upon condition that he would never again mention money to me. While he was mildly protesting, I got into my "spots" and make-up, stepped into his carriage and was driven to his palatial home in Mayfair. It was a very beautiful place, the immense iron entrance gates reminding one of a feudal castle.

When I entered the dimly lighted sick chamber the little girl turned her fever-flushed face to me and weakly clasped her little hand in mine. I sat down on the bed and told her the story about Goldilocks and the Three Bears in order to get acquainted and then softly crooned the lullaby as I never sang it before—or since. In less than ten minutes her hand slipped from mine, and she dropped off in a sound and natural sleep. Feeling she would continue in that condition, I left, promising to return the next evening.

Next afternoon the footman came with a note telling me the little girl had slept soundly all night,

and that her condition was much improved; also to say, "She was very sorry that I had left without waking her, so she could thank me and say good-by." Isn't that just like a child?

That night's performance of Barnum's Circus at Olympic Gardens was given without the aid of its premier clown, for again I sang the little girl to sleep and through the crisis of the fever.

She's married now, and has a child of her own; a fine sturdy son who made an enviable record in the service of his country during the World War. As I look at their pictures while this is being written, I feel that my life has not been lived in vain. The greatest thing in the evening of Life, is the feeling that one has made people happy.

Patrons of the old one-ring circus were easily pleased. It was not necessary to have a new clown song each season, particularly if the old song appealed. Dan Rice sang *Root, Hog, or Die* with success for five seasons. Without exception this song had a stronger appeal to the farmer contingent than any other clown song ever written or sung, and Old Dan invariably sang six to eight encores. My own song, *Down in the Coal Mines,* written by Jay Rial, the first man to introduce

dogs in presenting *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* also went big, not only in America but in England as well. After every performance the audience went out whistling, singing or humming the chorus.

"Down in the coal mine underneath the ground,
Where a ray of sunshine never can be found,
Digging dusky diamonds, all the season round,
Down in the coal mine underneath the ground."

For an encore, I sang a little love song which never failed to make every bashful young farmer slyly seize his sweetheart's hand and give it a tender little squeeze. The chorus ran:

"Pull down the blind,—pull down the blind,
Pull down the blind, love; come don't be unkind.
Tho' we're alone, bear this in mind:
Some one is looking, love, so pull down the blind."

Between 1878 and 1890 a number of songs, such as *Up in a Balloon, Boys; Billy Barlow; Love on the Brain,* were great hits when sung under a circus top. *Billy Barlow* with its chorus in waltz time never failed to bring rounds of applause.

"To the great fair in Philadelphia, I went the other day
The man at the gate, he axed me to pay;
What! says I, Pay? and I looked at him so;
Pass on, Sir, I know you—you're Billy Barlow."

Recently I sang the chorus of one of these songs over the radio. Would you believe it, there came a deluge of requests for other old-time clown songs. It must be because a favorite old song stealing unexpectedly upon the air is as welcome as seeing an old friend come in at the door. The quality that makes a song immortal persists and radiates and warms the heart as nothing else can.

The songs reproduced in this volume are those made popular by clowns under the circus top during the period from 1873 to 1892. Many of them are still being sung with success by vaudeville performers. Like old friends they ring true. It is my very earnest hope that they will bring as much pleasure and joy to the reader as they have to me.

There are two kinds of clowns familiar to people who patronize amusements—the clown who juggles old jokes in the circus ring, and the clown whose only language is that of facial expression and whose grins and grimaces together with his extraordinary antics and white face are more acceptable to childhood than the ancient and petrified humorisms of his brother laugh-maker in the sawdust circle.

No circus clown in the world could stretch the heart-strings of an audience farther and hold them there longer than George L. Fox, the king of pantomimic merry-makers. His was a face readable as the pages of a book printed in good large type, and the wonderful swift changes that came over it were like fleecy clouds and sunshine chasing each other across a summer sky. Poor Fox, who sent a thrill of joy into the hearts of thousands of little folks, his was a hard, an undeserved fate—death in a madhouse, without a glint of reason to light him on his journey across the dark river! He has left no successor more worthy of his place than George H. Adams, whose talent obtained for him the recognition of Adam Forepaugh, the showman.

Adams is the eldest son of Charles H. Adams, one of the best pantaloons of his day. He comes from a family of circus people, being a descendant of the famous Cookes, riders and clowns, and is a cousin of the late W. W. Cole, the circus manager. He was apprenticed to the manager of Astley's, in London, when he was six years of age, and remained there eight years. After appearing as clown with a circus in Denmark, he

came to America and for several years traveled with different circuses. His first appearance as clown in the pantomime was in Brooklyn, New York, in 1872, under the management of Tim Donnelly, who gave a pantomime every year during the Christmas holidays. His father was the stage manager for Donnelly and suggested to George the idea of playing clown. George refused at first but finally at his father's earnest solicitation decided to go on. He made an unmistakable hit and from that time deserted the sawdust arena and adopted the stage. After several successful seasons with Nick Roberts and Tony Denier, he accepted an offer of partnership with Adam Forepaugh to run a show under his own name.

Mr. Adams is still hale and hearty at the ripe age of seventy-five years. He is comfortably fixed in money matters, having been left a competency by the will of W. W. Cole, the first millionaire circus proprietor. I often call on him and we spend many pleasant hours in going over the days of the one-ring circus.

Pantomime was not the only requisite in the olden days of the circus. Clowns had to possess

also the art of repartee. They were obliged for the most part to create, there being no very good source from which to draw their comedy dialogue. One important thing necessary to the success of the dialogue was the choice of a subject which appealed to the masses and classes of both sexes. What might please city audiences, would not appeal to those of small towns. There were no radios, moving pictures or illustrated newspapers to educate the people in contemporary comedy and wise cracks. Audiences were best reached and controlled by the language they understood.

These handicaps reduced the choice of repartee to a minimum. The most universal topic was that of maiden ladies. Old maids were a target for at least seventy-five per cent. of all the humorous dialogue between ringmaster and clown, the following being considered superlative satire in the circus a generation ago.

"I say, Mr. Ringmaster, I did not see you down to the party the other night."

"Very sorry I could not come, Petie. Did you have a good time?"

"Wonderful, we played Poor Sinner, Post-Office, and a new kissing game called Auction."

"What do you mean by Auction, sir?"

"Well, we paid ten dollars to kiss a young girl, five dollars to kiss a married lady. Old maids were selling at three for a quarter. Did you ever kiss an old maid, Mr. Ringmaster?"

"No, sir, have you?"

"Have I? Kiss 'em once, they cry with delight.
Kiss 'm twice, they'll set up all night;
Kiss 'em three times, they holler for MORE.
They know how it goes—they've lived here before."

Continuing with:

"You may talk of English women, who love their
beef and beer,
Of dark-eyed Italian beauties, who love their land
so dear,
Of Spanish turtle-doves who sing of wealth and
love,
But give me the Blankville girl—she wins my
esteem,
'Cause every time you kiss her you get the flavor
of onions, pork and beans."

This one, which would be sprung just after the lady rider had jumped over the banners, never failed to bring a laugh:

"Ah, the young lady is quite a jumper."

"She is indeed, sir—a *wonderful* jumper."

"I, too, am a jumper, I came from a family of jumpers. I have a brother who jumped ten thousand dollars in debt, but he couldn't jump out again; and I had another brother who jumped from a church steeple into a wagon-load of hay. When he got half-way down, I yelled, 'Look out, Jimmy, there's glass in the hay.' "

"Terrible—and what did he do?"

"What did he do? He turned right around and jumped back again."

Last but not least in the repertoire of clown jokes, the following dialogue never failed of applause. A conservative estimate of the number of letters I have received for copies of it would total hundreds.

Where can a man buy a cap for his knee?
Or a key to the lock of his hair?
Can his eyes be called an academy
Because there are pupils there?
In the crown of his head
What gems are found?
Who travels the bridge of his nose?
Can he use when shingling the roof of his house
The nails on the end of his toes?
Can the crook of his elbow be sent to jail?
If so, what did he do?
How does he sharpen his shoulder-blades?
I'll be hanged if I know, do you?

Can he sit in the shade of the palm of his hand?
Or beat on the drum of his ear?
Does the calf of his leg eat the corn on his toes?
If so, why not grow corn on the ear?

No circus performance of forty to fifty years ago, was considered complete without a Pete Jenkins act—generally performed by a riding clown. It goes like this:

Dressed in rags and feigning intoxication, the clown stumbles over the ring bank while a riding act is on. He is unceremoniously ejected, but persistently returns, vociferously protesting that "one ticket admits to the whole show, and I'm going right through."

His persistence finally culminates in a demand to "ride the hoss."

"Now, see here," says the master of ceremonies, "That's a wild hoss, and the proprietors of this circus don't care to pay for breaking your neck. I don't believe that you ever rode a horse in your life; unless it was perhaps a sawhorse."

Loudly protesting, he insists on mounting and attempts to clamber up over the horse's tail. After a number of ludicrous attempts, in which he mounts facing the tail of the horse, he is started off around

the ring, his body rolling from side to side like a ship in a storm.

Seizing the tail of the horse, he succeeds in turning around to face in the right direction. Lying on his stomach, he grasps the horse's ears and holds on for dear life. Frequently he releases one hand, with which he beckons to the ring attendants to stop the horse. By easy stages he rises to his feet and begins to discard his old clothing, throwing each piece separately into the audience, continuing until he stands erect in full riding costume, the most daring bareback rider of the world.

The Pete Jenkins never failed to thrill young and old alike.

It was built up by William Sholes, a bareback equestrian who descended from a long line of riders. His father was Alexander Showles, who, with his wife, rode principally for many years with Astley in London. For professional reasons, Showles changed the spelling of his name to Sholes. How Billy Sholes could ride! With what ease and grace he stood erect on a flying horse, facing opposite the direction in which he was going; arms folded, he made no movement whatsoever to keep his balance. When it came to backward somersaults, he was a

Pavlowa on horseback. I saw him ride for many years; only once did I see him miss his footing, and that was because his horse stumbled and fell.

For several years after my retirement, I regularly saw his name in the rosters of big shows, and then he dropped out of sight. I tried to trace him, but could learn nothing of him except that he had grown too fat to ride, and had sold his ring stock for money on which to live.

In 1911, I opened a motion picture theater on Fulton Street, New York City. One night, I fell into conversation with a policeman whom I knew. In the course of our talk I happened to say I used to be a clown with Barnum.

"That's a queer coincidence," said the officer. "I have just been talking to a short stocky fellow who said he used to be a bareback rider with the same show. He is working as a night watchman on a sewer which is being dug down in the Wall Street district. On the next round of my beat, I'll bring him up—you may know each other."

In about an hour he walked into the theater, followed by no less a person than Billy Sholes,—one-time champion bareback rider of the world. The years had been kind to him. Except for a

Billy Sholes. In the author's opinion, the greatest equestrian bareback rider the world ever saw. From a picture taken at the age of fourteen.

A clown wedding. The marriage of Harry LaPearl to Mabel McGinley in Madison Square Garden in 1910.

sprinkling of gray in his hair and a superabundance of flesh, he was the same Billy Sholes of old, happy-go-lucky and cheerful.

I asked him why he did not stick with the circus in some other position than that of rider, saying that surely with his knowledge and experience he could officiate in some other capacity, even though he was too fat to ride.

"Bob," he said, "I just couldn't do it—I just couldn't hang around with the crop of riders they have doing principals to-day. Look at them! Not a single one can make a running ground mount without grabbing hair."

I knew what he meant and could sympathize with him. "Grabbing hair" was not Billy Sholes' way of mounting a running horse from the ground. He never landed on the withers of a horse, holding on to the mane until he got his balance, as they do to-day. Straight as an arrow from the bow he landed erect on the rump of the horse going at breakneck speed, never moving a muscle until he made his final backward somersault, landing on the ground. He completed his act by turning wagon-wheels to the ring entrance, where he made his graceful bow.

He would accept no money from me, although I felt sure he was in need of it. I took him round to a famous old "beef and beans" restaurant on Beekman Street which is never closed, day or night. Calling the proprietor and his manager to one side I said to them, "Do you think you would know this gentleman if you saw him again?"

"Yes," they said, "we think we would."

"Well, if he ever comes here," I replied, "give him whatever he wants in the way of food or money, and send the bill to me."

By the payment of small amounts from time to time, I know that he availed himself of the privilege but he never abused it.

I did not see him again until he sent for me in 1924 to come to Bellevue Hospital, where he lay on his death-bed. He was a mere shadow of his former self, but the same old Billy Sholes—cheerful to the last. As I sat for a couple of hours, going over our early experiences under the white tops, I found myself deliberating over the queer ways of Providence, and the scurvy tricks Fate sometimes plays on us. Here was a man who had been neither profane nor profligate, who had lived a sober and moral life, forced by no act of his own

to end his days in a charitable institution—I confess its justice seemed beyond me.

Poor Billy Sholes passed away the night after my visit to him. Some of his old associates and brother professionals, friends in days when he was prosperous, got together and saved him from being buried in potters' field. I felt when I saw all that was mortal of poor Billy being lowered to its last resting place, that I was seeing the last of what was once the greatest bareback rider of all time.

My development as an acrobatic clown, may be credited to old Dan Rice, himself a clown, and perhaps the best known and best loved of all American clowns in the early 'seventies. Dan began to realize at this period that he was becoming too old to do acrobatic stunts, so he picked me out to wear his clown toga and began to turn his attention to the education of trick horses. He trained many of medicore ability. His crowning achievement in this line resulted in Excelsior and Excelsior, Jr., two very clever examples of educated horses. Excelsior, Jr., was stone blind, made so by rearing up, falling backward and striking his head on an iron-bound toe pin which held the guy wire of a horizontal bar.

This old horse amazed and amused audiences throughout the "sticks" for many years. It was a great blow and a severe loss to Old Dan when the horse died of colic, caused by too much green corn that had been given him by two little boys with whom Dan left the horse while he prepared for the parade.

As evidence of the amount of labor to be performed in order to receive a fair salary, one of the contracts for my services is reproduced:

New York City, April 11, 1887

Articles of agreement made and entered into this day by and between P. T. Barnum, party of the first part, and Bob Sherwood, Artist, party of the second part. Said P. T. Barnum engages said Bob Sherwood for a season of thirty weeks, commencing on or about May 1st next, at a salary of $200.00 per week, also board, washing and traveling expenses, the aforementioned sum to be paid said Bob Sherwood each and every week during the continuance of this agreement. Said Bob Sherwood promises to give his services as hereinafter specified performing semi-daily, Sundays excepted, during the term of this agreement.

Said Bob Sherwood hereby agrees to give his services as clown, pantomimist, tight rope and wire walker, trapeze, tumbler and horizontal bar performer, principal and scenic rider, object holder and to make himself generally useful during the time specified above.

Said party of the first part further agreeing to furnish said party of the second part with one or two horses every morning if desired for rehearsals.

Signed sealed and delivered on the day and date above written, in the presence of

Witnesses for P. T. Barnum — P. T. BARNUM (seal)
YANKEE ROBINSON

Witnesses for Robert E. Sherwood
DAN RICE

ROBERT E. SHERWOOD (seal)

Please note the term "generally useful" mentioned in the contract. After covering by specification almost all the gymnastic acts to be done under a circus top I was required to make myself "generally useful, object holder" etc.,—in short the clown is the buffer between performer and audience. Object holder is now an obsolete term. It was used in old circus contracts to mean the person who holds paper hoops which the rider jumps through, and streamers over which he vaults.

CHAPTER IV

THE DANCING HORSE

THE earliest mention of performing horses is made in Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* where Don Adriano De Armada says: "How easy it is to put the word years to the word three, and study three years in two words, the dancing horse will tell you."

The allusion is to a young horse, which was called Marocco, exhibited in the court yard of the Belle Sauvage Inn on Ludgate Hill, London, by a Scotchman named Banks. Shakespeare undoubtedly saw these performances. A quaint wood-cut ornaments the pamphlet advertising the feats done by Marocco, who must have been one of the first trained horses ever exhibited. He danced, walked on his hind legs, carried gloves to persons pointed

out in the audience, rapped with his fore foot the numbers on dice, and so on.

London was wonder-struck in 1600 when Banks took his horse to the top of St. Paul's Cathedral. It was said in France that the horse did his work through the aid of witches; to counteract this Banks taught Marocco to bow at the sign of the cross, in order to prove his Satanic Majesty had nothing to do with it. Banks lived until the time of Charles the First, and thrived as a vintner in Cheapside.

An English horse was burned alive in 1707 in Lisbon, the master of which had taught him to know the cards.

Grainger's Biographical History of England, written in 1779, records the fact that "a horse which had been taught tricks" was, with his master, summoned before the Inquisition.

Samuel Pepys, in 1668, saw horses in the King's Playhouse, in a play called *Hyde Park,* in which foot and horse races were represented. A real horse played the part of Pegasus in Corneille's *Andromeda* at Paris in 1682. Adorned with wings and hoisted up by the aid of machinery, he neighed and tossed his head, pawed and pranced.

The early trainers understood that the feats of picking up gloves and handkerchiefs, even the pulling of triggers, originated in the horse's efforts to find his oats.

When Astley's was rebuilt at London in 1803, the horse drama was added to the circus and proved profitable for several years. In 1810, a grand drama called *The Blood Red Knight* was produced here netting Astley eighteen thousand pounds, a considerable sum in those days.

This prompted Coleman at Covent Garden to follow with *Bluebeard* in which a troop of trained horses appeared. The actor horses were kept under the stage, which led one critic to say, "The odor is so abominable, one might as well sit in a stable."

Bluebeard was followed by Monk Lewis' *Timour, the Tartar* in which a large troupe of Arabian horses appeared. This performance was the first spectacular horse drama produced in London. For a fancied grievance against the producer, many in the audience held up large placards condemning the horses, but the horses triumphed and horse spectacles continued to be a feature, though Covent Garden was then managed by John Kemble, the great tragedian.

Coming down to horse drama within the memory of living men, *The Cataract of Ganges* and *Mazeppa or the Wild Horse of Tartary* are the most prominent.

Mazeppa was always performed by men until Adah Menken, performed the feat in 1861. Later Kate Fisher, Leo Hudson, Kate Raymond, Fanny Louise Buckingham and Parepa Rosa, were strapped to the untamed horse and sent up the runs at the old Bowery and other dramatic temples throughout the United States. Parepa Rosa was, perhaps, the most famous in this part. She thrilled audiences for many years from the back of Black Bess, a beautiful coal-black animal which she had personally trained for the part. While performing in St. Louis, Missouri, in the early 'seventies Black Bess missed her footing, fell from the runs and broke her back; although Miss Rosa was strapped on her back she miraculously escaped injury. The animal lived in great agony for twenty-four hours after the accident, as Parepa Rosa refused to allow her to be removed from the theater. She held the horse's head in her lap, leaving her only to step to the footlights and offer ten thousand dollars to any surgeon who could save Black Bess.

Parepa Rosa never played again, although she trained several other horses for the part, ridden by others.

In Adah Isaacs Menken, and her impersonation of "Mazeppa, or the Wild Horse of Tartary," the world saw the first female bareback rider. The daring of her equestrian feats brought her to stellar heights, but in no sense was she an honor to her profession. Beginning her career as a dancer in a New Orleans theater, her native city, her rise was rapid.

She adopted the Jewish faith early in life. At an age when most girls are occupied with dolls, she wrote many clever verses and essays, and accomplished the difficult task of translating the *Iliad* at the age of thirteen. In Latin, Hebrew, Spanish and German, she was as proficient as in Greek.

Having made her professional début at the age of seventeen, she performed in the principal cities of the United States till she was twenty-one, when she hastily betook herself to Paris to perform in a French version of the drama, *The Pirate of Savannah,* and then, it appears, her career became hectic.

Flushed with the success of her Parisian en-

gagement, the versatile Menken, followed by a horde of lascivious admirers, took up her abode and activities in London, not at the Italian opera as a dancer, nor at Drury Lane as an actress, as her fame would have entitled her to do, but at Astley's Circus in the character of "Mazeppa."

It was unfortunate that the management pinned their faith to her powers of attraction, her beauty, grace, and her ability to play the part without recourse to a double for the fencing and riding scenes, rather than upon her talent as an actress.

Enormous colored posters met the eye everywhere. These represented the lady, apparently nude, stretched and bound on the back of a wild horse, and invited the public to go to Astley's to see "the beautiful Menken." Young men thronged the theater, thrilled with delight at the dramatic spectacle and Menken's *poses plastiques*. Menken became a lion in London; or more properly speaking—a lioness, mixed a little with the panther. She inveigled many London notables, including the poet Swinburne and the somewhat phlegmatic Charles Dickens, into a series of orgies. In justice to Dickens, however, it should be written that he was the unwilling victim of circumstance.

Such a rage did Menken become that both young and old men struggled to enter the circle of her admirers. But the theatrical critics were not to be caught; they looked coldly upon her escapades and accused the management of catering to a vitiated taste.

Adah Menken at the time of her engagement at Astley's was twenty-seven years of age. A few years previous she had become the wife of John C. Heenan, the pugilist, whose perfect physique had won her regard, when the wealthiest men in California were strenuously striving for her hand. Their marriage was not a happy one, for which both have been blamed. The cause of difference was undoubtedly one in respect of which neither could reproach the other without provoking recrimination.

Heenan who was then in London was often present at Astley's during his wife's engagement. It was reported that both desired a reconciliation, and that Adah had come to London with that end in view; but nothing was accomplished.

The beautiful Menken went back to Paris, and was said to have lived on terms of tender intimacy with the elder Dumas. She died there shortly after-

ward, and her remains rest in the little cemetery of Père La Chaise.

Adah Isaacs Menken was undoubtedly a woman of rare natural talents and great accomplishments. While in London she published a volume of poems, *Infelicia,* a title which correctly describes their tone and character. Some of them are as wild as anything that has emanated from Walt Whitman, and more are replete with the weird fancies and wayward genius of Poe; but all are pervaded by a deep and touching melancholy, which seems to shadow forth the specter that haunted the author's gay and brilliant life, like the garlanded skeleton at the festive board of the ancient Egyptians. From the suggestive title to the last of the little head-and-tail pieces, designed unquestionably by Adah herself, everything in the book impresses a lesson which may be read in Ecclesiastes. In the first of these tiny engravings we read the moral of the author's life-story. It represents a woman stretched on the shore of a stormy sea, with her face to the earth, her dark hair flowing over her recumbent form, which is faintly illuminated by the fitful light of a moon half-obscured by drifting masses of black clouds. The book was

dedicated to Dickens, and contains a photographic reproduction of a letter from the great novelist, thanking "Dear Miss Menken" for her portrait and giving her the desired permission for the dedication.

Had moving pictures been in vogue during her career, she would have unquestionably become a film favorite. She was possessed of grace, talent and beauty and the necessary requisite of four divorced husbands.

It would be ungallant to say, or even insinuate, how many years Madame Tournaire was queen of the ring. If anybody has any doubts about circus life promoting longevity and maintaining a perennial youth, they should have gazed upon her brown locks after forty years of service.

Madame Marantette was another who seemingly discovered the fountain of youth under a circus top. Judging her age by mine, she must be past seventy, yet I saw her performing her ménage act with the Wallace and Hagenbeck shows no longer than five years ago. Her ruddy thatch had changed to one white as the driven snow, yet the same ease and grace was present as in the days of her youth.

I went round to the pad room to visit her after her act. As we had not met for thirty years or more, she did not recognize me, although I could see she was trying hard to recall the dim past. I asked her to turn her back to me, which she did; then I gave a sharp shrill whistle which I used during our circus days to notify her that our act was called. She let out a scream and clasped her arms around my neck, like a mother welcoming a long lost son, the tears streaming down her face. We sat down on some property boxes and talked, into the morning hours, of the bygone days of our youth.

Madame Marantette took up horseback riding for her health when a young girl. She had a capable instructor in the person of her sister, Myrtle Peake, one of the first female hippodrome riders in this country. After a long career as a trainer and exhibitor of high-school horses with various tent shows, she organized and conducted the first horse carnival, and gave exhibitions in connection with race meetings and county fairs. Her star equine performer was Filemaker, a big brown rangy gelding, who could clear eight bars with ease. In Evergreen, a beautiful dapple gray,

Madame Marantette had the best educated high-school horse that ever worse shoes. In my opinion she was the greatest female trainer of performing horses that ever wielded a whip over an educated animal.

The Julian family, three in number, were very clever in their line of work. Martin and Rose were contortionists, or "kinkers," as they were called in the vernacular of the circus. During their professional career in the early 'eighties they drew the highest praise wherever they appeared. They were descended from a long line of English acrobats. The duration of their professional life was short, as Martin took on flesh rapidly after arriving at man's estate, which forced him to retire. Rose married Bob Fitzsimmons, the pugilist who defeated James J. Corbett for the championship of the world at Carson City, Nevada. Martin Julian acted as "Fitz's" manager for many years, and incidentally, married Fitzsimmons' divorced wife.

The third member of the family, Miss Dallie Julian, was a very clever equestrienne. Unlike her talented brother and sister, she was very slender and petite. While doing her act, she resembled nothing so much as an animated French doll, turn-

Martin and Rose Julian. Two of the author's associate acrobats in 1881. Rose married Bob Fitzsimmons, Martin became Bob's manager, and married Fitz's first wife. Rose, in reality, invented the Solar Plexus punch as she persistently called to Bob to "'it 'im 'ard in the kitchen," during the Fitzsimmons-Corbett fight.

Ada Isaacs Menken. Born a gentile, she adopted the Jewish faith through marriage. Translated the *Iliad* at fourteen years of age. Close friend of Charles Dickens, Swinburne, and Alexander Dumas, Père. The first woman to ride the wild horse in *Mazeppa*.

ing, twisting and pirouetting on the broad back of her French Percheron with the grace of Fanny Ellsler. Perhaps no equestrienne of those days gave as much care and attention to her costume as did Dallie Julian. I have known her to spend an hour before her mirror preparing for her appearance in the sawdust circle. She had the exquisite taste of a great artist in working out little details of her toilet. During her spare moments she constantly worked on her wardrobe, which was the envy of every woman on the show. Standing in the ring beside her powerful Percheron, she looked like a little flower girl at a wedding celebration.

Miss Dallie broke many hearts under the big top, but none so cruelly as that of a tubby ticket-taker who was almost driven insane over her. The little fellow followed after her like a poodle, but Miss Dallie would have none of him, or, for that matter, of any other person connected with the circus.

One night there came up suddenly a terrific wind-storm. Tents and poles were scattered all over the lot. The little ticket-taker made a quick dive for the dressing top to rescue Miss Julian, arriving in time to see her carried out in the arms

of the gigantic groom who cared for her horses. "Just my luck," he growled. "I'll bet if I was in a department store when the lights went out, I would be in the piano section."

After looking at the riders of the present, I somehow seem to feel that the equestrians of my day were the greatest ever. Apparently they had a dash and finish not possessed by contemporary riders; this leads one to believe that good circus riders must be to the manner born—not made.

There were Jim Dockrell and his wife, Madame Viola Rivers, and their two sons. Every member of the family was a finished artist. Then came the Melvilles—Frank, Rose and George—whose riding invariably created a sensation. Next were Jim Robinson and his two boys, who introduced bare-back riding on a trotting horse. Following them came Billy Sholes, Charley Fish, Miss Linda Jeal, and, last but not least, dainty Josie La Mott. They make a list of kings and queens of the sawdust circle that can never be equaled. If riders of their caliber rode in the ring of the circus to-day, they would enhance the performance in a superlative manner.

But now, with a few exceptions, they are dead, and they have left no one on whom their mantle

has fallen, unless perhaps one excepts Miss May Wirth or Poodles Hanaford.

In no other enterprise does the horse attain such prominence as in the circus. Horses of every shape, size, color and intelligence have been exhibited at one time or another under canvas. They are selected by connoisseurs in horse flesh, from the diminutive ponies which draw the chariot of the Fairy Queen to the ponderous Percherons which pull the parade wagons. Every one is an aristocrat in his class. Brains and beauty are prime necessities; these attributes they must have in order to qualify. Possessed of these, their education is more or less easily accomplished.

Some horses can never be broken or trained sufficiently to be reliable for service in the ring. Others evince a natural aptitude, or perhaps talent, for it, and learn very easily all that is requried of them. It generally takes from eighteen months to two years to get a horse so well trained that he will not shy, or bolt, or break his gait in the ring, but will keep steadily on his round, indifferent to what is happening at his back, or beside him, or even under his feet,—if the luckless rider happens to tumble there, where he has no business to be. In some instances, however, horses have been known

to work well the very first time they have been put in a ring before an audience.

A horse is usually educated for a single service only. If it is for "pad" riding he is kept to that. If one of two or four horses are trained together for the comparatively rare double or quadruple acts, he is not allowed to muddle his equine brains by attempting a knowledge of hurdle leaping or tricks,—and so on. Old horses are frequently best, because they have settled into a steady gait and, if they have no ingrained vices, are reliably phlegmatic under extraordinary but possible circumstances.

The hallucination pervades many minds that circus men have secret and ingenious ways of frescoing their remarkable calico horses, using walnut juice and other compounds to dye patches on milk-white steeds until the parti-colored effects are obtained. This is an error, however. They buy up horses which, like the darky in the minstrel story, are "not colored, but born that way." No special breed of horses produces these freaks of color, but the finer bloods, it is said, seldom show them. They are recruited from common stock, and why they come that way we can't tell, any more than Jim Fisk could answer his own conundrum, "Why God makes the little apples grow."

CHAPTER V

THE ANIMAL FAIR

THE most approved method of training wild animals of the feline species is to cross-hitch them securely in a small cage wagon, the trainer sitting just beyond the reach of their paws when they plunge forward at him. Each attempt on their part to injure brings in return a sharp cut across the nose with a rawhide whip; this is kept up until the pupil begins to understand that he will be punished every time he does it.

The period usually required to bring them to this understanding is from sixty to ninety days. The supreme test of nerve comes when the breaking harness is entirely removed for the first time.

Trained animals of the cat species are more reliable when captured and broken after they

mature. These seem to possess a fear of man not shared by those born in captivity.

With performing "cats" the trainer is fairly safe as long as the animal has no room to crouch and spring. It is for this reason that a trainer of lions and leopards—in fact, all animals of the cat tribe—perches his performers to avoid having them spring on him while he is putting others through their paces. As long as they are kept perched the trainer is comparatively safe from attack. Lions become so docile in training one can feed them raw meat from the bare hand. There is one thing, however, the trainer can't do—that is to handle the young of any lion before entering a den; he is sure to be attacked. No naturalist has ever been able to give any definite reason for this trait, but it is supposedly a sex appeal.

The carnivorous animals when en route with a big circus are fed daily at about five P. M., except Sunday. On one day in each week they fast. An hour before feeding time they become restless, pacing back and forward, emitting low growls and roars of expectancy. They lie sleepily about on Sundays, knowing they will not be fed,—and they never mistake the day. Is it instinct or reason?

The simian tribe are buffoons and usually learn through imitation. Perform something in sight of a monkey often enough and sooner or later he will repeat it. Edgar Allan Poe unquestionably knew of this trait when he wrote his famous story, *The Murders in the Rue Morgue.*

The lion is lazy, a sort of poser among animals, perhaps a bit proud that his looks have given him the title of the King of Beasts.

The tiger is a fighter. Place one full-grown tiger and three lions in the same cage and the tiger will come forth badly disfigured but alive. The lions will stay behind—dead. With all his strength, the lion is a coward, and therefore he is treacherous. If a lion miss his quarry when he springs he does not renew the attack at the time, but prefers to skulk away and wait for another chance.

The giraffe is the only known animal that utters no sound. He is absolutely mute. Seemingly he is entirely lacking in vocal organs. Too bad they are not human! What wonderful wives they would make! What they lack in voice they make up in the use of their heels. An ordinary giraffe can kick a chew of tobacco out of a man's mouth while both are running at full speed.

One of the best protections for a trainer and breaker of beasts is a chair or stool. Nearly all animals have a one-track mind, and are usually unable to grasp simultaneously the use of two articles, even though the objects may be exactly similar in shape and size.

The use of chair or stool as a subduer of animals of the feline species, was inadvertently discovered by a lion tamer while sitting in an open den on parade. The line of march became blocked, and the trainer grew tired of being the target for a gaping crowd and decided to get out and ride back to the lot on top of the cage. As most of the route had been covered, it was of small importance whether he remained inside or not.

When he attempted to leave by the side exit a young tiger, only fairly well broken, planted himself across the aperture and resolutely refused to budge. Whip, blank cartridge and command availed nothing. To all appearances he had but one aim in life, and that was to stick by that door.

The trainer, George Conklin, several times advanced toward him, but as he gave unmistakable signs of springing on him, desisted for the time being. Conklin was at his wits' end. It would be

very dangerous to allow even a well broken animal to get the better of his trainer in a peaceful argument, to say nothing of one just beginning to be handled.

Usually in cases such as described, a rod of iron heated red-hot in the fire box of the calliope would make the beasts move pronto. Unfortunately, the fireman on the calliope had drawn his fire, having no occasion to use it until the next day. So Conklin decided to resume his seat, and have it out with Mr. Tiger when he reached the lot.

Reaching for his stool, which was behind him, he slowly brought it around, with the four legs pointed toward the stubborn cat. The effect was electrical. The tiger gave one spit and snarl, and made for the farthermost corner of the cage with his tail between his legs. Conklin was not sure in his mind what made the brute so suddenly move. If it was the stool, it was worth another try in order to be certain. The tip was too valuable to be lightly cast aside.

Cautiously cutting the bad actor out from the others he again worked him around to the barred exit, when again he balked. Conklin grabbed the stool and jabbed it, legs forward,

almost into his majesty's face, and again it had the effect of precipitating the tiger to his favorite corner. Thereafter, a four-legged stool became a part of the training equipment.

Like the human family, all beasts are afraid of what they can not understand. Of course, there was nothing harmful in the four legs of a stool, but the tiger was unable to concentrate collectively on all four legs at one time—he could not grasp the meaning of them; consequently, he was afraid. Had he known the stool was harmless, he would have torn it into toothpicks.

Fear in the abstract plays an important part in the breaking and education of all animals. They must be made to mind. They must learn that man is their master. Once permit a brute to fail in completing a trick for which he is trained, twice the amount of persuasion and pluck will be necessary on the part of the exhibitor to get him to do it properly the next time.

While it is necessary that the breaker be fearless and firm, it is also highly important that the animal which is being handled be made to understand that he will not be brutally beaten when he obeys. I have known occasions when confidence

accomplished more than coercion. When it became necessary for lions or tigers to be transferred to another cage, which was often necessary, I have seen trainers walk boldly into the midst of a snarling group of gigantic tigers and lions and lead them through the connecting door, when prodding and pushing on the part of caretakers had accomplished nothing.

For the exhibition of supreme nerve in critical situations, Jack Bonavita, who for many years broke, trained and exhibited Bostock's animals, had it over all trainers of my acquaintance. Unfortunately, his lack of fear quite often led him into serious predicaments and subsequently the loss of his life. He was a mild monomaniac on the subject of courage. He lived quite near me in Brooklyn, and we became very friendly.

In his group was a big black-browed brute named Baltimore. This lion was whelped in captivity, and consequently had a contempt for man not shared by one which had been captured and conquered after reaching maturity.

So foolhardy was Bonavita in the chances he took while putting Baltimore through his paces that I continually cautioned him.

"Now, Jack," I admonished, "I've seen a lot of lions during my circus life, and I've studied their habits and traits carefully; and I know you can't trust one that has been born in captivity. Mark my word, if you keep on taking liberties with that fellow, you are going to have trouble with him."

"Don't be foolish, Bob," he argued. "Look at my name—Bonavita—what does it mean?—a good life. I'll be working cats when old Baltimore will be eating spoon vittles." Whereupon he grabbed the lion's shaggy mane and gave him a vigorous shake.

"Well, I hope you're right," I returned. "Far be it from me to wish you bad luck, but unless I miss my mark, some day, when you least expect it, Baltimore will do you dirt."

"If he tries anything like that he will find an argument on his hands," retorted Bonavita.

"Yes," I replied, "no doubt he will if he gives any warning. But my experience teaches me that on occasions such as these, they give no warning. Look out for him."

My prophecy came true. Bonavita had constructed a large leather bag filled with hog hair, which fitted over his hand and forearm. This de-

vice he used to drive the lions through the long chute into the performing arena. When they refused to move, he thrust the bag almost in their faces; not knowing what it was, they were afraid of it and made a mad scramble toward the opening.

One day, just previous to his exhibition, he tossed the bag into a den of young cubs to see whether or not they had the same fear of it as the grown ones. As it was not associated with man (the only thing they were afraid of), they playfully cuffed it about, rolled it over and over, fawned on it and had a royal good time. Satisfied with his investigation, Bonavita picked up the bag and went over to drive his pupils through the chute for their act. The last to start was Baltimore, with Bonavita following close behind him. For no apparent reason, the lion suddenly faced Jack, stopped stockstill and refused to budge. Bonavita first tried to turn him by whip and voice; failing in this, he thrust the leather bag almost within an inch of his nose. Baltimore scented the odor of the cubs on the pillow. With a resounding roar the enraged brute reared on his hind legs and launched himself directly at Bonavita's throat. Falling short of his mark, he seized the trainer's arm be-

tween his jaws with a sickening crunch. The assistants could not render any aid by the use of their loaded revolvers as they were unable to get into the narrow passageway, and they were afraid to fire through fear of hitting Bonavita. Realizing he had to act quickly in order to save his life, Bonavita hastily drew his pistols loaded with blank cartridge, firing three blinding flashes full into the face of the enraged animal, which caused him to release his hold, and hurriedly run through the chute. It was a close call. The arm was amputated, but a slow blood poisoning set in and after a long struggle poor Jack lost his life.

With the stump of his arm in a sling, Bonavita continued to perform the lion. No amount of persuasion on the part of his friends could cause him to desist. Again and again, I looked for Baltimore to renew the attack, but he did not, although on several occasions he gave indication that he was contemplating belligerency. This kept up till Jack was too weak to go on.

Bonavita lost his life through a disregard of a maxim well known to all trainers and performers of the feline species—never enter their cage with the scent of their cubs on your person.

Brazilian, spider and ringtail monkeys are the easiest of all animals to train. Their education is rarely attempted in a circus as no teacher cares to aspire to the questionable distinction of having devoted time to the training of these pusillanimous simians. The training of chimpanzees and mandrills, or blue-nosed baboons, is an entirely different and a very precarious proposition.

It is to be seriously doubted whether any genuine gorilla has lived in captivity in this climate long enough to permit of his being trained. Usually the laymen mistake oversize chimpanzees for gorillas. Many thousands of dollars have been spent by circus proprietors in an attempt to bring baby gorillas to an adult age, but their efforts to date have been futile. Seemingly they can not stand the rigor of climate, lung diseases usually being the cause of their death.

Mandrill monkeys are the meanest examples of the tribe of baboons. They are obstinate, treacherous and troublesome. Seemingly they are bright, but it requires almost superhuman effort and everlasting patience to educate them to a point where they can be depended on to perform in public. As long as one has hold of his hand, or has him

at the end of a stout controlling chain a mandrill "monk" will comply with commands; otherwise he will let his attention wander toward insignificant happenings which would go unnoticed by another animal.

To my knowledge a trainer consumed six months in trying to teach one of these idiots to walk across the ring and shake hands with him and then was not sure that he would do so when desired. In order to perfect him, the teacher constructed what he called a "war bridle" from strong rawhide. The device was similar to a lead harness used on large dogs. To the ring top was attached a light thirty-foot chain, the end of which was held by four strong men, myself included. When all was in readiness, the trainer spoke sharply, "China! come here!" But China was seemingly interested in doing anything else but complying. Again the command was given, with no result. At a signal from the trainer, we gave a united heave on the chain, which had the effect of making Mr. Monkey transcribe an arc through the air, which terminated at the feet of the trainer.

All of the heavers, except "Towbelly" Collins, an elephant man, knew pretty well what would

happen after the monkey got his bearings, so immediately after jerking on the chain, we all made a hasty exit, except Towbelly, who had his hands and arms badly bitten and scratched, and his "other shirt" torn from his back.

"You bloody beggar," roared Towbelly, "if I can find me a cake of ice, I'll hold yez on it till yer blasted beak is bluer than it is now."

After a year's patient effort this mandrill was able to do somersaults on the back of a galloping horse, but one could never be sure that he would not face the tail of the horse instead of the head.

If man descended from monkey, he is entitled to great distinction for making something out of nothing.

For stubbornness to a superlative degree, however, commend me to an inbred pony. Nine out of ten of these quadrupeds continuously carry the proverbial chip on their shoulders. The only language they understand is that of the whip. Once subjugated, their education is rapidly accomplished. I saw the old clown, Dan Rice, work ten days on a rascally little pony before he would stand still when commanded. Rice taught him mathematics. Figures and numbers suggested by the

audience would be written on a small blackboard, and the pony to all appearances added, subtracted or divided at command, indicating the figure to set down by pawing with his right forefoot. His act created a sensation, and Rice was interviewed by a number of scientific men of that day in an effort to determine whether or not the pony had the power of reason which his exhibitor claimed for him.

Candidly, the pony knew no more about mathematics than one could drive into a turkey gobbler with a pegging awl. He was taught to continue to strike the ground with his forefoot so long as Rice stood stockstill; on the slightest movement of the trainer or the whip in his hand, the pony would stop instantly, having learned through a cruel experience that he would be severely thrashed if he did not do so. Often Rice would allow him to run beyond the proper figure in order to create the impression he had made a mistake, then start him anew until he struck the proper answer, at which the multitude marveled much.

One of the tricks performed by the pony was the untying of a handkerchief loosely knotted around the pastern joint of his hind foot. Teach-

ing him to perform this trick was exceedingly easy, and perfected by Rice in three lessons. It was only necessary to give him a taste of the sweetened water in which the end of the handkerchief had been dipped before tying it around his leg.

Unfortunately, the groom, whose duty it was to prepare the 'kerchief, by mistake once soaked the end in some white horse liniment, and it required two weeks of patient effort on the part of the trainer to get him to do the trick again.

Ponies are plainly dumb-bells, permitting their minds to wander round like a loose button on an overcoat. Perhaps for this reason more than any other, pony acts have become obsolete. About the only excuse for training a pugnacious pony is because his diminutive size appeals to the audience.

When a horse is to be trained for bareback riding, he is chosen more for his mentality than he is for size, shape or color. I have admired the work of a number of ring animals more than the acts of equitation performed on their broad backs. They must be trained to a degree where they have but a single purpose in their minds—to keep up a rhythmic gallop until they know the act is finished, or they be commanded to stop; without this fixity

of purpose on their part, all riders would fall short of a finished performance. I have seen ring horses gallop over animate and inanimate obstacles placed in their paths, without the slightest halt in their undulating gait.

White or dapple grays are usually chosen, for the reason that these colors do not show the resin which is always plentifully sprinkled on their rumps to prevent their riders from slipping. On account of this they are dubbed "resinbacks" by circus people, in order to distinguish them from work and other performing horses in the show. The "resinback" is usually a mongrel, as mixing the breed seems to be the only system whereby sense and size can be secured.

On one of my legs is a scar resulting from a bullet wound, which is an ever-present reminder of the practise of rubbing resin in the hair on circus horses' backs. While I was standing one night in the pad room, waiting my cue to go on, one of the horses used by Billy Sholes was led into the enclosure by the groom, a taciturn tyrant by the name of Birney. After looking the horse over, Sholes charged the caretaker with failure to sprinkle resin on the horse's rump. The argument became heated, and charges and counter-charges came thick and

fast. Suddenly Sholes shot out his right fist, catching the caretaker full on the point of his jaw. As he was in the act of falling, he drew a large army pistol and fired it in the general direction of Sholes' face. Unfortunately, I had approached the belligerents for the purpose of acting as a peacemaker, and the bullet, going wide of its mark, pierced my left leg, just below the thigh. The surgeon who dressed the wound said that a quarter of an inch higher the shot would have severed the femoral artery, and I would have bled to death before help could have reached me. Had the missile struck the same distance lower down it would have shattered the bone, necessitating amputation of the limb and probably resulting in death.

It was quite the closest call in my circus career. So close was I to the muzzle of the pistol when it was fired that a portion of unburned gunpowder was found in the lateral aperture of the wound.

So pleased was the groom over my failure to prefer charges against him that he became my devoted slave while we both were on the circus. On cold nights in the early spring, he never failed to have a warm woolen horse blanket to wrap around me when I came off from my act, or if the weather was hot, a cooling palm leaf fan would be ready.

CHAPTER VI

"THE ELEPHANT WALKS AROUND"

"The elephant walks around,
And the band begins to play;
The boys surround the monkey's cage,
They'd better keep away."

THIS chorus from the old song of the one-ring circus shows the prominence held by that mountain of buffoonery—the elephant. To my mind there is no comedian in the animal kingdom which equals him—not even the monkey.

From the earliest history of the circus to the present, the performing elephant has been considered a paramount feature of the show. A circus without elephants would be like *Hamlet* without the melancholy Dane. He is not only a clever performer, but a necessity. He can quell a riot,

lift heavily loaded wagons out of ruts, and draw big crowds to the ticket wagon. It is a safe guess that his pachydermic majesty draws about seventy-five per cent. of the audience.

The first record of an elephant exhibited in America refers to one by the name of Hannibal. He was brought to America in the year 1824, by Van Amburgh, and was one of the largest of his species. His height was twelve feet four inches. It was claimed that he was a third larger than any other elephant ever brought to this country. When Hannibal was imported, it was thought that he was already old, but as he kept on growing showmen concluded that he was still young—the natural term of life of the species being from three hundred to four hundred and fifty years.

This animal's reputation was at first almost unparalleled for viciousness, but he apparently reformed and became docile in character. Before that he repeatedly broke loose and had killed on different occasions as many as seven persons. The last exploit of the kind which Hannibal undertook was in Rhode Island, in the year 1854. When about seven miles from Pawtucket, on the road to Fall River, he became furious and turned on his keeper,

who had to fly for his life and take refuge in a house. Hannibal got free and rushed along the road for nine miles, followed closely by his keeper, but destroying every obstacle in his path. Great credit was due to the keeper for courage and perseverance manifested on the occasion in following and finally conquering the enraged animal and taking him safely to the menagerie. Hannibal, although guilty of many bad traits, was not entirely destitute of the kindlier feelings; at times he exhibited an inconvenient degree of ferocity, and at others a sagacity beyond the power of man to comprehend.

It is justice to the venerable Hannibal to append an anecdote that is to his credit, and is also illustrative of the great intelligence which his species possess.

In December, 1825, he was exhibited in the menagerie in New York. He was attended by a keeper named Martin, and a mutual regard existed between them. A tiger and tigress were in the exhibition and contrived to make an aperture in the flooring of the cage. They then bounded into the apartment and sprang upon a beautiful llama, which, with the elephant and some smaller

animals, was permitted to go loose. It was killed immediately, and they began to devour it. The roaring and screams of the other brutes were most terrific, and all their native wildness seemed to have returned. Martin, hearing the unusual noise and imagining that they were impatient for food, proceeded into the room, when the first objects that met his gaze were the tigers preying upon the llama. He seized a stick to drive them into their cage, when the tiger left his victim, intending to spring upon Martin. In the meantime Hannibal hurried to his friend, wound his trunk around his waist, lifted him in the air out of the reach of harm, and kept him there safely until assistance came and the savage brutes were secured.

While traveling in Vermont, several years after, his keeper fell in a fit from his horse. Hannibal immediately took him upon his tusks and held him there—the keeper's dog licking his face until he revived. The rear van found him in that position on their arrival at the scene.

So much has been said, and so much has been written, of the sagacity of the elephant that there is very little left to be recorded. Perhaps, therefore, it will be well for me to confine myself to

relating incidents which have come within my personal knowledge.

Many incidents of the sagacity of the elephant have been told, some of them so unusual as to raise a question as to their truth. Do elephants reason? has been a moot question among naturalists for ages. I was an eye-witness to the following incident and can vouch for its being genuine.

I was standing in the menagerie top one day, as the audience was coming in, when my attention was attracted to a little boy who was being urged to place some peanuts in the trunk of old Queen. He was very timid and very reluctant to approach near enough for the animal to reach them. Just as his father gave the boy a gentle shove to bring him a little closer, he drew back his hand and threw the whole bag at her, and then turned and ran. The package of nuts was thrown with such force that it burst at the bottom of the canvas sidewall, out of reach of her trunk.

She stretched her toe chain several times in an effort to reach them but without success; then she tried to attract the attention of her keeper, in the hope that he would get them for her. In this also she was unsuccessful. For perhaps a half-minute

she stood still, seemingly in a quandary; then she suddenly stretched out her trunk as far as she could reach toward the side-wall, and blew a terrific blast against the canvas. The wind caromed off the wall and under the bag and the nuts were rolled within her reach. Was it reason or instinct?

I have several times seen this same elephant commit thievery that any pickpocket would have been proud of. She was the first on the line, and next to the refreshment stands. In those days privilege men sold old-fashioned gingerbread from the stands and seats. As a rule, lemonade, which she abhorred, was placed on the end of the stand next to her. But sometimes, by mistake, the basket of gingerbread would be placed on the end next to her, and then—good-by, gingerbread! It was worth going miles to see how cunningly she went about it. As soon as the attendant's back was turned, out would go her trunk, and back would come a hunk of bread. This would be kept up until the entire contents of the basket had disappeared. If the owner suddenly faced about before she had an opportunity to place the bread in her mouth, she would conceal it in a small wisp of hay, until she had an opportunity to eat it. After she had suc-

cessfully stolen the entire contents, she would utter exulting little shrill mutters as if to say: "Yes, I did it, but how are you going to prove it?"

When it came to making herself generally useful, she was a whole team and the cross dog under the wagon. No matter how mixed the cage wagons were on arrival from the parade, she would single them out and push them to their proper places in the circle without guidance from any one. She made only one exception; no amount of threats or cajoling could induce her to tackle the cage containing the rhinoceros. Perhaps her fear was instinctive, as the horned rhinoceros is held in great respect by the elephant when in his native haunts.

Old Queen had a great love for her caretaker, a little sawed-off and hammered-down Irishman, known as "Towbelly" Collins. Whenever Collins could get hold of whisky, which was often, he got roaring drunk and regularly took refuge under his charge to sleep it off. Woe to the person who attempted to remove him!

I worked as a clown with Queen for three seasons. It was at the time when telephones were first invented. She would stretch out her trunk, and I would talk into it as I would in a telephone

transmitter. When I finished the pantomime, she would whirl around and present her tail to my ear for me to "listen in"; which I did with hilarious laughter, giving the impression that I was listening to my own speech.

Twenty years after I quit the circus, I went up to Madison Square Garden to the annual opening of the season. A crowd of old acquaintances were standing at the head of the elephant line, talking of old times and humorous incidents, when I suddenly laughed long and loud at a story told by one of the press agents. Immediately old Queen set up a monstrous trumpeting—she had recognized my laugh. She would not be pacified until I went down and spoke to her. She wound her trunk around me like a mother embracing a long lost child, uttering little shrill squeaks of ecstasy. Suddenly she backed away and put out her trunk for me to whisper in it, exactly as she did in our act nearly forty years before. I took her snout in my two hands and squatted as I did in the old telephone act. When I had finished and dropped her trunk, around came her tail for me to "listen in" to my own talk.

When riots occurred, as they often did, old

Queen was there with a rolling pin, like a belligerent housewife. When the battle cry of "Hey, Rube" was sounded, no one had to tell her what to do. All one had to do was to release her leg chain, put a toe pin in her trunk and fall in behind her, and the manner in which she would scatter the enemy would do credit to any steel fighting tank. She never once made the mistake of striking an employee of the circus no matter how dark the night. None knew better than she the custom canvasmen had of tying a white handkerchief around their necks at the first fight alarm, and thus lessen the chances of striking a brother in the dark, or being struck by one.

On February 2, 1882, Queen gave birth to a young one at winter quarters in Bridgeport. The event had long been anticipated and thoroughly published throughout America and Europe. Scientists, all over the country, had been informed that, the period of gestation being known to be about twenty months, a "Baby Elephant" might be expected early in February. The public press, naturalists, college professors and agents of zoological gardens in Europe were on the *qui vive*. When the interesting event was imminent it was

telegraphed through the Associated Press to all parts of the United States, and about sixty scientists, medical men and reporters arrived in time to be present at the birth. The next morning more than fifty columns of details of the birth, weight and name of the Baby Elephant appeared in the American papers. Notices cabled to London and Paris appeared in the morning papers there. As this was only the second elephant ever born in captivity, whether in America or Europe, the event created a great sensation. The baby's weight at birth was only one hundred and forty-five pounds. It was named "Bridgeport," after the place of its nativity.

It was on the tenth of March, 1880, that Hebe, a large elephant belonging to the Cooper, Bailey and Hutchinson Show, became a mother. This was the first elephant born in captivity. With excitement over the Baby Elephant, naturalists and men of science rushed in numbers to Philadelphia, examined the wonderful little stranger, and gave glowing reports to the papers of this country. Illustrated papers and magazines of this and foreign lands described the Baby Elephant with pen and pencil, and before it was two months old Mr.

Barnum offered the lucky proprietors one hundred thousand dollars cash for mother and baby. They gleefully rejected his offer, had a twelve sheet stand of bills made of Mr. Barnum's telegram, and for once "P. T." got the worst of a publicity stunt.

So much has been said, and so much has been written of the elephant Jumbo, that very little remains to be told that the public would be interested in. Jumbo was killed by a freight train in the railroad yards at St. Thomas, Ontario, on September 15, 1885. The dwarf clown elephant, Tom Thumb, was slightly injured by the same train. Mr. Barnum adroitly contrived to make the public believe that Jumbo lost his life in an heroic but unsuccessful effort to save the life of the smaller elephant.

I happen to know that Jumbo was a big obstinate brute and was killed by his refusal to get out of the way of a fast freight. As proof of his stubbornness one has only to remember his behavior when the attempt was made to get him on board ship after Mr. Barnum purchased him in London. Jumbo was a three-toed, or African, elephant. This breed is uniformly stubborn.

The following table shows his measurements.

I can vouch for their correctness as I personally made them.

Neck—Smallest circumference, 11 feet 6 inches.
Body—Circumference at shoulders, 16 feet 4 inches.
Circumference at middle, 18 feet.
Circumference at hind legs, 17 feet.
Fore legs—Circumference of leg 3 feet above sole of foot, 3 feet 10 inches.
Fore legs—Circumference of leg 5½ feet above sole of foot, 5 feet 7 inches.
Hind legs—Circumference of leg 2 feet above sole of foot, 3 feet.
Hind legs—Circumference of leg 4 feet above sole of foot, 4 feet 8 inches.
Length of tail, 4 feet 6 inches.
Length in all, 14 feet.
Height to shoulder, 12 feet.
Weight, 7 tons.

After his death, his skeleton was mounted and presented to Tufts College. His skin was stuffed and carried for two years as an attraction with the show. Mounted on a platform wagon, it led the grand entry, followed by Alice, his widow, and fifteen other elephants, each carrying in his trunk a sheet with a wide black border, with which they wiped their eyes, indicating their sorrow at his death.

The belief, indulged in by the general public, that if an elephant be offered tobacco, he will wreak vengeance on the giver, is all bosh. I have known several elephants in my life with the circus, who had such a penchant for tobacco they would pilfer it from the pockets of their keepers at every opportunity, especially if the tobacco happened to be what is known as the "fine cut" variety.

The difficulty encountered in teaching tricks to an elephant is mainly getting him to understand what is desired of him. Once that is made clear, he obeys commands with alacrity.

These big beasts possess a wonderful amount of personality. They are as widely different in taste and behavior as the human race. Each has an individuality peculiar to himself. It is commonly believed that they use their trunks as weapons of offense and defense; but they rarely do so, as this member is the most vulnerable part of their bodies. In their native wild when going through dense jungles they usually roll up the trunk behind the tusks to prevent its injury. In sanguinary encounters the elephant kneels on his adversary, slowly crushing the life out of him.

While leading a circus life, I took a great deal

of interest and pleasure in the study of the various animals exhibited before the public; of these, the big bull elephants have it on all others for sagacity and humor. They are the best buffoons in the animal kingdom. This trait in them is not generally known, for the reason that they are rarely studied from this angle.

The next time you attend the circus, give a little study to the individuality of these ponderous pachyderms. Watch them closely and you will discover they possess fads and foibles galore. Observe them when the circus patrons pass along in front of their line and you will see them make little fancy movements with their feet, accompanied by a rhythmic roll of their heavy heads. They are "grandstanding" to attract attention.

If his next-door neighbor pulls a crowd and consequently all the peanuts, up goes his trunk that he may exhibit his monstrous maw. He is ballyhooing to get the crowd from his competitor. Should he succeed he will give bragging little grunts of satisfaction over his success. He soon learns that a trunk extended horizontally gathers no "goobers," so he lays it on the guard rope, giving it an artistic upturn and making a silent solicitation

to the small boy to try his hand at pitching a peanut into the hole in his protruding proboscis. In weight, age, talent and versatility he has it on all other animal actors.

Permitting an elephant to straddle your recumbent form and lie down upon you, is considered a hazardous undertaking by the layman. To a trainer this trick is perfectly safe and easily taught. Concealed in the coat sleeve of the exhibitor is a short iron prod, a little longer than the thickness of his body. As the big brute begins to settle over his prostrate form, he surreptitiously slips the iron from his sleeve and plants the prod in a vertical position beside him. Mr. Elephant crouches until he feels the point which is a telegram to stop. This trick was taught first by Adam Forepaugh, Jr., who perfected it in two lessons.

From my study of elephants I have evolved a well-grounded suspicion that they get a great deal of pleasure over outguessing their keepers. On several occasions I have known them to untie their toe ropes and then turn their attention to releasing others. I have watched them surreptitiously steal and secrete under their hay articles of apparel belonging to their caretakers and noted a distinct

registration of humor in their eyes while the garments were being searched for by their owner.

They seem to derive an infinite amount of pleasure from the perpetration of jokes. One of these jokes, executed at the expense of Mr. Barnum, created a novel entertainment for a number of citizens of Wheeling, West Virginia, in the summer of 1882.

The weather was hot and sultry, and the trainer decided to give the herd a chance to disport themselves in the cool waters of the Ohio River which surrounded the island on which the pavilions were pitched.

After the return of the parade, their tawdry trappings were removed, and, each grabbing the tail of the one in front, they were led down the steep slope into the stream, where they immediately proceeded to roll round in the rapid current, giving vent to their pleasure by loud trumpeting and splashing, much to the entertainment of a large crowd of spectators standing on the banks of the stream.

As the time approached for the afternoon performance, the trainers started to round them up for their return to the lot. At each attempt they

majestically moved a little farther out toward deeper water; finally, led by old Queen, they reached the middle of the river, beyond the depth of the horses ridden by the caretakers, rejecting every artifice employed to induce their return.

The men were at their wits' end. Every expedient was abortive in its effect. One o'clock, the time set for the opening of the doors, arrived, and the elephants showed not the slightest indication of coming out. Worst of all, the prospective patrons remained on the bank and duly decided that the outside show was preferable to that inside—and also cheaper.

"P. T." was apprised of the state of affairs. He hastened down with sundry suggestions, each of which accomplished nothing. Seemingly they were there for the day.

Suddenly old Queen discovered the verdant foliage growing on the Ohio side. With loud trumpeting she headed for the opposite bank, followed by the entire herd. Fearing they would take to the tall timber, the trainers rode rapidly across the back river bridge, hoping to cut them off before they reached the shore. The men gained the opposite bank just as the leader reached shallow

water. Seeing she was cut off, she tranquilly turned back into deep water again followed by her constituency. All except old Queen then placidly proceeded to the West Virginia side, whence they were rushed to the lot. The problem was yet unsolved as no elephant act could be given without the aid of Queen who was the understander in the pyramid formations, and she was in the middle of the Ohio River, giving no indication of the time of her return. Securing a skiff, the men paddled out toward her. She resolved to sell her liberty as dearly as possible; deliberately waiting until the boat with its occupants was within range, she filled her snoot from the stream and giving a strenuous snort she shot water all over them, which caused them to retire rapidly out of range, followed by her victorious trumpeting.

Word was sent to the equestrian director to place the elephant act farther along on the program, while the board of strategy held a council of war. Queen had been in the water so long that the men shrewdly surmised she must be getting pretty hungry.

A borrowed boat was filled with hay and rowed up the river to a point about one hundred yards

above her position. The men then began to throw wisps of hay into the river in such a manner that they would pass between her and the shallow water.

She allowed half a dozen bunches to float by unnoticed, and the men began to lose hope. Eventually a small eddy in the river carried one of the portions within her reach. She gobbled it instantly and slowly waded in toward shallow water to pick up the bunches of hay which the men at intervals threw into the current. The procedure was patiently continued until she reached a depth where her trainer could ride in and throw the hook into her hide. All that afternoon I swear she had a comical look on her face that resembled a grin as much as anything I ever saw.

There is a great deal of humor in the make-up of an elephant. The big bull is usually described as having a wicked little eye; from a long acquaintance with these patient pachyderms, I think the word twinkling should be substituted for wicked. And there is something appealing and pathetic, too, in the hulking humorist that brings him hosts of friends. Notwithstanding his bulk, he's a boy in appetite. So long as food offered him is sweet, down it goes.

Nearly all the best working elephants are reared in India. The African species as a rule are sullen and treacherous, and very few have been trained to a degree where they could be depended on. The Indian elephant may be easily distinguished from his African brother by the number of his toes—the former having five toes, and the latter but three

Of all the creatures that have hitherto been taken into the service of man, the elephant is pre-eminent in the size and strength of his body. He is inferior to none in sagacity and obedience. From time immemorial, this animal has been employed for the purposes of labor, of war, or of ostentatious parade, to increase the grandeur of Eastern princes, extend their power and enlarge their dominions.

The elephant is a native of Asia and Africa and is not to be found in its natural state either in Europe or America. The height is from twelve to fifteen feet. The female is smaller than the male, and her tusks do not grow to such a size. In proportion to the size of the elephant, his eyes are very small, but they are lively, brilliant and capable of great expression. He turns them slowly and with gentleness toward his master. When the mas-

ter speaks, the animal regards him with mildness and attention. His ears are very large, and much longer in proportion to his body than those of the ass; they lie flat on the head and are commonly pendulous; but he can raise and move them with great facility, and frequently uses them as a fan to cool himself or defend his eyes from dust and insects. His hearing is remarkably acute. He delights in the sound of musical instruments, and moves in cadence to the sound of the bugle. There are four grinders in each jaw, closely united together, forming with the jaw-bone one hard and compact body. One of these grinders sometimes measures nine inches across and may weigh four pounds and a half.

The texture of the skin is uneven, wrinkled and knotty, full of deep fissures, scored like the bark of an oak tree, which run in all directions over its surface. It is of a tawny color, inclining to citron. In the fissures there are some bristly hairs, which are also thinly scattered over the body. The legs resemble massive columns of from fifteen to eighteen inches in diameter, and from five to six feet high. The foot is short and divided into five toes, so covered with skin as not to be visible.

To each toe there is affixed a nail or hoof of a horny substance.

The most remarkable feature of the elephant is his trunk, or proboscis, which is composed of membranes, nerves and muscles. It is an organ of feeling and motion. The animal can not only move and bend it, but can contract, lengthen and turn it in every direction. The extremity of the trunk terminates in a protuberance which stretches out on the upper side in the form of a finger, and possesses in a great degree the nicety and dexterity of that useful member; it is equally flexible and as capable of placing the smallest piece of money. It selects herbs and flowers and picks them up one by one; it unties the knots of ropes, opens and shuts gates, etc. With his trunk, the elephant grasps any object so firmly that no force can tear it from his grip.

All his emotions are orderly and correspond with the dignity of his appearance, being grave, majestic and cautious. He kneels down for the accommodation of those who would mount upon his back, and, with his pliant trunk, even assists them to ascend. One elephant will perform with ease the work of many horses. The natives of India

from very early periods have employed elephants in their wars. Porus opposed the passage of Alexander over the Hydaspes with eighty-five of them. Monsieur de Buffon imagines that it was some of the elephants taken by that monarch, and afterward transported into Greece, which were employed by Pyrrhus against the Romans. Since the invention of firearms, elephants have been of little use in deciding the contests of hostile nations; for, being terrified with the flash of powder and the report that immediately succeeds, they are soon thrown into confusion, and then become dangerous to their employers. They are now chiefly used for the purposes of labor or magnificent parade.

CHAPTER VII

GOING ON ALL THE TIME

NEXT to the cook top, the side-show, or "kid" top as it is known in circus vernacular, was the first tent to be erected and the last to go. The side-show performance is continuous, even as the barker tells us—"never out—never over,—going on all the time."

The side-show is about the only thing in the circus line which America inherited from England. In the latter country, freak or side-shows were dubbed "Van" shows.

Traveling from village to village, the Van shows gave exhibitions on market days. On occasions where a fair was being held for several days, they erected a small tent and gave continuous performances throughout the day and evening. A

giant, a dwarf and the inevitable Punch and Judy show were the usual attractions.

To get the people on the lot was of first importance to old-time circus men. This could not be accomplished until after the parade was over. While the street procession was on, a man, chosen for strength of voice, would take a seat by the side of a driver of a chariot wagon, which was usually placed about the middle of the parade; at regular intervals he arose to his feet to announce: *"Immediately* aftah the p-r-o-c-e-s-s-i-o-n, there will be a g-r-a-n-d f-r-e-e high wire e-x-h-i-b-i-t-i-o-n on the show grounds. E-v-e-r-y-b-o-d-y follow the p-r-o-c-e-s-s-i-o-n to the show grounds." Almost every one did, for the farmers and their families were great for anything free.

To some of them, however, it was anything *but* a free show. While they would be gazing up at the acrobat walking a wire stretched from the ground to the peak of the center-pole, pickpockets, always present on the lot, filched their purses.

Raucous of voice, loud in dress, but an absolute necessity for the success of the side-show is the ballyhoo barker. Sunshine or storm he is always to be found at his post endeavoring to "talk 'em in."

Any passer-by who stopped before one of the old time dyed-in-the-wool side-show barkers of the early 'eighties became a customer. It was seemingly impossible not to succumb to his blandishments. Lack of funds was about the only thing that prevented the purchase of a ticket. As he sat on his high box, garbed in clothing made of loud checked material, with his red scarf, big diamonds, and broad-brimmed hat, he looked every inch a king.

"W-e-l-l, *well,* good people," he would roar out, "there's *plenty* of time, plenty of time, before the large show is open. While you have time, money and oppahtunity, pass on the inside and see the wondahful monstrosities therein contained. They're a-l-l heah: the long peepul, the short peepul, the fat peepul and the lean peepul for one dime—ten cents, if you wish to see them. Going on all the time; continuous performance—nevah out, nevah ovah. See what the world contains beside yourself—see it all to-day. Recollect this canvas will be torn down, packed up and carried away to the cyahs, long before the show in the large top is ovah—see it all now. Everything on the inside *ex-act-ly* as represented on the outside. Come

o-n, good peepul, the small sum of a dime—ten cents, the tenth part of a dollah."

If the crowd thinned, he yelled "Ballyhoos," which was a signal to the freaks inside to "strut their stuff." Thereupon would begin a collection of yells, screeches and groans accompanied by a rattling of chains and bars by the people inside sufficient to appall the devil himself. If this failed to attract attention, then "Ballyhoos up" would be the cry, at which some picturesque freak or snake charmer would mount the outside box and be introduced to the crowd.

The most powerful ballyhoo was the Circassian beauty. "Sold into the slavery of a Turkish harem, and rescued at the point of the sword," she would be introduced by the barker. Blue-eyed, with a shock of blonde hair which had been soused in stale beer, to make it stand up in wild confusion, she displayed her feminine charms in a manner sure to attract and hold the attention of all observers.

The kid top or side-show is, as the barker claims, never out—never over—until both menagerie and circus tops are struck; then, and only then, can the dwarfs, giants and freaks seek slumber for a few hours before they begin the same thing over on the

next lot. Side-show people from barker and band down to canvasman and cook work harder than any others on the roster. Their hours of labor are from about ten A. M. to eleven P. M., with little time off for meals.

In addition to the usual freaks, snake charmers, giants, etc., practically all the shows in this country carried a ventriloquist. This art is one of the oldest of the amusement world, dating back to the time of the Witch of Endor. The appellation comes from the Greek, the literal translation meaning a voice from the belly.

The earliest notice of ventriloquial illusion has reference to Louis Brabant, *valet de chambre* of Francis I, who is said to have fallen in love with a beautiful and rich heiress, but was rejected by the parents as a low unsuitable match. However, the father dying, he visited the widow, and on his first appearance in the house, she heard herself accosted in a voice resembling that of her dead husband, which seemed to proceed from above. "Give my daughter to Louis Brabant, who is a man of great fortune and excellent character. I now endure the inexpressible torments of purgatory for having refused her to him; obey this admonition and I shall

soon be delivered. You will provide a worthy husband for your daughter and procure everlasting repose to the soul of your poor husband."

The dread summons, which had no appearance of proceeding from Louis, whose countenance exhibited no change and whose lips were closed and motionless, was instantly complied with. The deceiver, in order to mend his finances for the accomplishment of the marriage contract, applied to one Cornu, the old and rich banker at Lyons, who had accumulated immense wealth by usury and extortion. After some conversation on demons and specters, and the pains of purgatory, there was an interval of silence. A voice was then heard like that of the banker's deceased father, complaining of his dreadful situation in purgatory and calling upon his son to rescue him by putting into the hands of Louis Brabant, a large sum for the redemption of Christians in slavery with the Turks; threatening him, at the same time, with eternal damnation if he did not thus expiate his own sins. Upon a second interview, in which his ears were saluted with the complaints and groans of his father and all his deceased relations, which implored him, for the love of God and in the name of

every saint in the calendar, to have mercy on his own soul and others, Cornu obeyed the heavenly voice and gave Louis ten thousand crowns, with which he returned to Paris and married.

Many physiologists aver that ventriloquism is obtained by speaking during the *inspiration* of air. It is quite possible to articulate under these circumstances, and the plan may occasionally be adopted with advantage. My own practical experience, however, with close observation of many public performers and of not a few private friends, who have attained distinctness and no small amount of facility in the art, convinces me that the general current of utterance is during the *expiration* of the breath as in ordinary speech. Some imagine that the means of procuring the required imitation are comprised in a thorough management of the echoes of sound. Unfortunately, however, for this theory, an echo repeats only what has been already brought into existence. Several eminent ventriloquists, including the late Mr. Mathews, have displayed the vocal illusion while walking the streets. Baron Mengen describes as follows his mode of speaking when he desired the illusion to take the direction of a voice emanating from a doll.

"I press my tongue against the teeth and thus circumscribe a cavity between my left cheek and teeth, in which the voice is produced by the air held in reserve in the pharynx. The sounds thus receive a hollow and muffled tone, which causes them to appear to come from a distance."

The baron furthermore mentions that it is essential to have the breath well under control and not to respire more than can be avoided. Monsieur St. Gille was seen to look somewhat exhausted when the vocal illusion grew less perfect. All ventriloquists with whom I have conferred, have acknowledged that they experience fatigue in the chest, and have attributed it to the slow expiration of the breath. Monsieur St. Gille, with the majority of the ventriloquists, was often compelled to cough during the progress of his exercitation.

All side-shows of my time employed ventriloquists. Most of them acquired good results through the use of a whistle made of a thin membrane of rubber between two small plates of tin. They did a thriving business with these whistles at a price of twenty-five cents each.

Rome has long held the honor of being the birthplace of great generals, statesmen and sapients, but it remained for the Holy City of Jerusalem to

produce the greatest giant of record in the person of Colonel Routh Goshan, who was born there on the fifth of May, 1837. Colonel Goshan was the last of a progeny of fourteen children, all of whom were remarkable for their size and strength. He stood fully eight feet, two inches in height in his stocking feet, and weighed five hundred and ninety pounds. He measured eighty-three inches around the chest, twenty-nine around the biceps, and wore a number twelve shoe. History does not record a more astounding instance of family peculiarity than his. His father was only three inches shorter than the colonel, and his mother was taller than his father. All of his fourteen brothers and sisters were alike remarkable for uncommon stature. One of his brothers, Levi by name, reached the astounding weight of six hundred and seventy-nine pounds. Early in boyhood, Routh Goshan was sent to Great Britain where he served with distinction in the Crimean War as a captain of artillery, coming direct from the battle-fields to join Barnum's Great Menagerie and Asiatic Caravan for a tour of the United States.

No model ever used by a sculptor was more symmetrical and harmonious in outline than the

body of this charming gentleman. His vast expanse of chest gave token of Herculean strength, while his dark proud eyes and short upper lip gave unmistakable proof of the proud race from which he sprang. Colonel Goshan was a big man—not only big in stature and weight, but of big mental caliber. He was a gentleman under all circumstances, spoke five languages fluently and was versed in many sciences. He played on the stage for several seasons in the old Olympic Theater with Mr. John Wood, then with Mr. J. Townsend, joining the Barnum show about 1877 where he was a principal attraction for many years prior to his death in 1887.

No father ever had the welfare of his children more at heart than Colonel Goshan did the interests of the freaks in the side-show. He seemed to feel that he was specially ordained by Providence to care for these poor people, who from accident of birth were unable to care for themselves. For several years I saw him lifting the midgets on and off their exhibition platforms daily, bringing food from the cook top to the fat people who were unable to go after it, deciding their disputes, and acting in the capacity of a guardian to all of them

The following incident, of which I was an eye-witness, shows the prodigious strength of this biggest giant. As one of the big parade chariots, loaded with seat jacks, was entering the lot one morning a wheel dropped into a chuck-hole, hub deep. Several attempts were made by the four horses which were hitched to the wagon to pull it out, with no success. Usually in a case like this we sent for the elephants to push the wagon out of the rut. Before this could be done, Colonel Goshan happened along. Seeing the predicament of the driver, he straddled the hub with his back to the wheel; grasping the spokes on either side with his hands and shouting to the driver to start his horses, he gave one mighty heave and out rolled the wagon on to solid ground. As the wagon and load weighed but little less than five tons, some idea may be gained of the strength necessary to accomplish this feat.

I have sat, hours at a time, listening to the stories of his adventures and thrilling escapes when a soldier in the Crimean and Mexican wars. He was taken prisoner at the battle of Check Water, but, according to the colonel, "it took a whole regiment to do it."

There have been many giants placed on exhibition before and after Colonel Routh Goshan, but none has ever come up to his standard.

Without question, the most unique and picturesque freak exhibited before the public was Captain Djordgi Costentenus, the tattooed Greek prince. There was not a spot on his body from the hair line of his head to the soles of his feet that had not been subjected to the torture of the tattooing-needle—even to the tips of his fingers and toes—"every prick of the needle drawing blood and bringing a tear to the eye," to quote the lecturer who introduced him. His body was a living proof that truth is sometimes stranger than fiction. That he was tattooed in one operation is proved by the unity of the pattern which covered his body. With the exception of his eyes, which were weakened and inflamed by the indigo injected into his system in the operation, he was hale and hearty. Marked almost from birth for misfortune, his after-life fulfilled the promise only too well.

Costentenus was a native of Albania, in Turkey, although his parents were Greeks of Christian faith. On one of the wild raids of Ali Tebelen, the bloody Pasha of Yanina, who attempted to press

Dan Rice, the "Daddy" of all American clowns. Rice taught the author the fundamentals of pantomime in 1871.

Captain Costentanus, the tattooed Greek Prince. The only man in history who was tattooed from his scalp to the soles of his feet. The Captain spoke and wrote several languages, was a great scholar and reader, and an ardent Christian.

the young Greeks into his army, young Costentenus was captured. His captor was the same Ali prominently featured by Alexandre Dumas in his celebrated novel, *The Count of Monte Cristo.*

Costentenus fell a victim of the tattooing-needle through his Christian faith. Surely the Christian martyrs in the Roman arenas suffered no more than he. The pain must have been terrible, although not affecting the brain. He told me that as the lines of blood-drops extended farther and farther over the white sensitive skin, and all the nerves began to twitch, the sweat stood out on his brow and he groaned aloud with pain.

No merciful insensibility came to relieve him. All the punctured surface of his body swelled up and fearfully inflamed, and felt as if the skin had been stripped from the body.

Ordinary tattooing designs are traced in outline only; those of Costentenus were solid and made up of blue dots close together over the whole surface of the skin. In one day more than three square feet became a mass of needle pricks, every puncture infused with indigo poison.

The designs were drawn by hand—elephants, tigers, lions, snakes and sphinxes, opposed to one

another in symmetrical patterns, the whole presenting a picture never to be forgotten.

After his grueling experience, his body, terribly swollen and inflamed, was wrapped in bandages, previously soaked in linseed oil. He told me that for years after he was able to retain only liquid food, so thoroughly was his system impregnated with the poison.

He was discovered, rescued and brought to America by P. T. Barnum, who learned of him through a Spanish sailor while traveling in the Mediterranean on Tom Thumb's first European tour. He was first placed on exhibition in this country at George B. Bunnell's Museum, which stood at the corner of Broadway and Ninth Street, New York City, the site now occupied by John Wanamaker's store.

He appeared at Bunnell's Museum because Barnum's Museum was burned in 1868 and was not rebuilt. At first the newspapers paid but little attention to him, the press notices branding him as a Barnum "humbug," "painted to order," etc., and stating in no uncertain manner that it was impossible for any living man to survive the operation of tattooing when extended over the whole surface of

the skin. Eminent physicians of that day declared emphatically and vehemently that the inflammation well known to accompany the operation is so severe that its continuance over a period of three months must be necessarily fatal to the most powerful constitution. Finally a committee of eminent surgeons, scientists and clergymen was appointed to investigate. After much long drawn-out wrangling and discussion, Costentenus was pronounced genuine. It is safe to assume that "P. T." had something to do with the length of the discussion.

When his engagement closed at Bunnell's, he was placed on exhibition in museums in the larger American cities. Finally, in 1880, he joined Barnum's Great Asiatic Caravan and Museum of Wonders, where I first met him and heard his terrible and thrilling adventures from his own lips. Poor old fellow; he was a freak in appearance, but not by nature. He bore his sufferings and trials with fortitude and he had them a-plenty, for believe me, the temperature under a wet circus top in the early spring is sometimes of such a nature as to make a well-clothed man shiver; how much worse, then, if one had to strip a dozen times a day to semi-nakedness!

As his eyes were weak, I often read the Bible to him. This he seemed to enjoy greatly, although his knowledge of Holy Writ was limited, as the following anecdote will show. One day I was reading to him the story of Noah, beginning with: "And lo, when Noah was an hundred and twenty years old, he took unto himself a wife; who was [here I turned over two leaves which were stuck together] three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits broad, and thirty cubits high—and she was pitched within, and pitched without"—a description of the Ark. The old captain looked at me with blinking eyes and said: "Bob, women of the old times were certainly wonderfully and fearfully made."

His strange and curious appearance was a stellar attraction. He never failed to draw big houses wherever and whenever he was put on exhibition. Like the majority of his profession, he was improvident and his friends bore the expenses of his funeral. One of his last acts in life was to present to me his old purple bathrobe, with the remark, "Take it, Bob, it has been my closest friend through life."

Fat people have never been considered as much of an asset by circus proprietors; as a matter of

fact they are more of a liability than otherwise. They are rarely ever in good health and are utterly incapable of caring for themselves. Most fat freaks are afflicted with a disease known as elephantiasis, an enlargement of the lymphatic glands.

Big Eliza, a negress weighing six hundred and fifty-seven pounds, was carried by the Barnum show for two seasons and then dropped for the reason, as stated by Mr. Barnum, "that she should be selling pianos and carrying her own samples." Her lithographs were always drawn to show her being transported from town to town on a flat car, in order to give the impression that she was too big to get through the door of an ordinary coach. Her respiratory organs were so congested with fat that she could not sleep while lying in a horizontal position. She took catnaps in a chair between exhibitions, an attendant waking her just before her turn in the show.

Her husband was a diminutive Guinea negro, whose whole time was employed in taking care of her. I felt sorry for the poor little runt, as she had a vile tongue and consistently and continuously vented her spleen on him. It must have been a great relief to him when she died.

In my opinion the greatest of all freaks of malformation was Laloo, the Hindoo boy, and his brother. This young man was fully developed in every detail, with the attenuated body of his brother attached to his chest. This second body lacked a head, was about three feet long, and had a separate set of vital organs, with only the digestive system wanting.

Having been exhibited since his birth in many countries, he spoke fluently in every known language. He was also able to read all the languages he spoke. He died from an attack of pneumonia at the age of fifty-seven. His case enlisted the attention of scientists all over the globe.

The first "professional" dwarf recorded in history was John Woremburg, a Swiss, who was exhibited in London in 1688, at an admission of one shilling. His height was two feet and three inches. At the time of his appearance he was thirty-eight years of age. Although not authentic, it is claimed he lived to an age of one hundred and eight years, a very unusual length of life. At the age of fifty he married a lady of normal size, and two girls and one boy were born to the couple. All were perfectly formed, especially the son who attained a height of six feet three inches.

The *Massachusetts Magazine,* of September, 1789, gives an account of the marriage of two dwarfs as follows:

"The Princess Natalia, only sister to the Czar, by the same mother, ordered preparations to be made for a grand wedding of two of her dwarfs, who were to be married, on which occasion several small coaches were made, and little Shetland horses provided to draw them. All the dwarfs in the kingdom were summoned to celebrate the nuptials, to the number of ninety-three. They went in a grand procession through all the streets of Moscow, preceded by a large open wagon, drawn by six horses, with kettle drums, trumpets, French horns and hautboys; then followed the marshal and his attendants, two and two, on horseback; then the bridegroom and bride, in a coach and six, attended by their bride's man and maid, who sat in the coach before them. They were followed by fifteen small coaches, each drawn by six Shetland horses, and each containing four dwarfs.

"It was somewhat surprising to see such a number of little creatures in one company together, especially as they were furnished with an equipage suitable to their stature. Two troops of dragoons attended the procession to keep off the mob, and many persons of fashion were invited to the wedding, who went in their coaches to the church, where the small couple were married; from thence the procession returned in order to the princess's palace, where a grand entertainment was prepared for the company. Two long tables were covered on

each side of a long hall, where the company of dwarfs dined together. The princess with her two nieces, Princess Ann and Elizabeth, the Czar's daughters, took the trouble themselves to see them all seated, and well attended, before they sat down to their own table.

"At night the princesses, attended by the nobility, conducted the new married couple to bed, in great state; after that ceremony the dwarf company had a large room allotted them, to make merry among themselves; the entertainment concluded with a ball, which lasted until daylight. The company which attended the princess upon this occasion were so numerous that they filled several rooms."

So much has been said and written of the dwarf, Charles Sherwood Stratton, better known as General Tom Thumb, that there remains but little to be told. Perhaps it will be well to confine one's self to anecdotes about him which the general public has never heard.

Tom Thumb was not the smallest, but he was the smartest dwarf ever placed on exhibition. His brain was developed to a degree far ahead of his body. Had he not been handicapped by his diminutive size, he would have become a Napoleon of finance. He had all the requisites except size. Even with this handicap against him, he brought to

fruition some shrewd business deals, in which his sagacity played a major part. To my knowledge he first conceived the plan of insuring another person's life for his benefit. The idea was suggested through his failure to get insurance on his own life. At that time insurance companies were not rating dwarfs as good risks, as they were notably short-lived.

It was on account of his business qualifications that Miss Lavina Warren accepted him for a husband. Miss Warren had been more impressed by the better-looking Commodore Nutt, a smaller and handsomer dwarf than was Tom Thumb. The general realized that he had to have something more than beauty in order to win Miss Warren's affection. With the aid of Mr. Barnum, a week-end party, which included the general and Lavina, met in Bridgeport, where the general drove Lavina about the city, being careful to point out pieces of real estate to which he held title. Shortly after dinner Mr. Barnum discreetly retired, leaving the little couple together. The general ardently pressed his suit by showing Miss Warren proof of many business deals which he had successfully negotiated. Lavina was duly impressed. The

general popped the question then and there, and Miss Warren showed herself a willing worshiper at the throne of Mammon by promising to marry the general.

The general was very frugal in his living. He would have been a successful numismatist had he seen fit to enter that profession, as I feel sure that he had the first dollar he ever made; moreover, the money he made in one day would be in his possession the day following, plus the interest.

General Tom Thumb and Campanini, the Italian tenor, were great friends and spent much time in each other's company in the off season. Campanini was also very economical. The general once won eleven dollars from the tenor on a pair of deuces, which came near to giving him heart failure. In a spirit of reprisal, he challenged the doughty general to a match game of billiards for a side bet of fifty dollars. Campanini figured that the general's dimunitive stature would be a serious handicap to his playing. Colonel Charles Mapleson, Campanini's manager, kept the tally. The game was played in the Old Morton House which stood on the corner of Broadway and Union Square. The general ran the game out in five

innings, defeating the singer by nearly sixty points. Campanini was still lamenting his loss when he sailed for Italy the week following.

General Tom Thumb and I were together in the Barnum show for several seasons. At that time he was beginning to feel and show the effects of his many years of travel. He was inclined to be testy and garrulous. At the end of the third season he retired to private life.

One day he asked me to go with him to Burr's tailor shop, on Fulton Street, New York, while he got measured for a new suit of clothes.

I tried to get out of it by saying that my taste was not very good in the matter of men's wear, but he insisted.

"Come along, Bob," he said, "if I go alone, they will take advantage of me because I am little. They always measure my purse instead of my person."

From the earliest days of the circus to the present time the exhibition of Albinos has been a common thing. As a rule only individuals have been shown. The original Albino family, four in number, consisted of Herr Lucasie, his wife and two children, a boy and a girl. They came from the

island of Madagascar. Hair, skin and eyebrows were pure white. The only relieving color about them was their pink eyes, which remained open while they slept, the pupils nervously twitching from side to side, whether asleep or awake. The father was a giant in stature, nearly six feet and four inches tall, and weighing nearly three hundred pounds. The boy, past sixteen when I first saw him, was a clever violinist, while the daughter possessed a very sweet voice.

They were stellar attractions with the circus during their long career.

The O'Brien show had with it, one season, a juggler who was billed as the great Zombroso. He was of a taciturn turn of mind, but had withal, a quiet sense of the ridiculous.

Late in the season the show struck the equinoctial storms and business became very bad. Top after top was taken in wet, and it began to look as if the show would be forced to go into winter quarters through a lack of funds for food and salaries. The performers were persistently pressing O'Brien for pay. Finally the proprietor, with his back to the wall said, "All you performers who insist on being paid line up here in alphabetical order, and

I'll pay off as far as I can." Zombroso was last in line, and long before he was reached the funds were exhausted and he received nothing. As a matter of fact the money lasted no longer than the letter "B." When the time approached for the opening of the next season, O'Brien wrote "The Great Zombroso" and offered him an engagement. He replied that he would like to join out again, but this season he desired to be billed as "The Great Achilles."

CHAPTER VIII

RAZORBACKS AND SKIN GAMES

CANVASMEN or "razorbacks," as they are known in the slang of the circus, are rarely in funds. Their tippling habits, coupled with their receiving only half pay while on the road, keep them continuously in financial distress. Settlement in full is made only at the end of a season, or on being discharged. This method of payment was established by the Miles Orton show in 1876, in the hope that razorbacks could be kept in working condition throughout the season. Vain hope! It did not take them long to learn how to beat the game. Just as soon as the parade left the grounds, two men would leave the lot, carrying an empty gallon jug and bound for the nearest saloon. Selecting one which the

parade would pass, they would step in and order the jug filled with the best whisky in the house. On being told the best whisky would cost them eight dollars per gallon, (a big price in those days) they would reply, "Oh, that's all right, the liquor is for Mr. Barnum's personal use, and he drinks only the best." A bold statement, considering Mr. Barnum's temperance principles were well known.

The jug being filled and set up on the bar, the spokesman would airily say, "Mr. Barnum sent us over here after this liquor, and he said to tell you that he would come right over after the parade and pay for it."

Then the proprietor would indignantly refuse to let them have it. Heated argument would ensue; finally, with a gesture of disgust, the head spokesman would say, "Well, then, I guess you will have to pour it back in the barrel." The liquor being poured back, they would leave the saloon with alacrity; arriving on the lot, the jug would be broken and almost a quart of liquor would be squeezed out of a big sponge in the bottom of the jug, and a general good time would be had by all.

Not only would the gin-mill keeper lose the whisky, but often a five or ten-dollar bill in addi-

tion. These were the days before cash registers came into use, and it was customary among bartenders to lay the paper money and small change on the back bar for the sake of convenience. While the bartender would be under the bar drawing the whisky, one of the men would stick a wad of warm chewing gum on the end of a cane he carried, reach over the bar and pick up any bills in sight. He stood in little danger of detection, as all the customers would be outside looking at the parade.

When money was required, canvasmen sold "tickets" to the ladies' dressing tents. The price of the tickets depended on the amount the purchaser could be cajoled into paying. There were always young farmer boys, and old ones too for that matter, walking around the horse tents during the afternoon show. Selecting one who looked particularly impressionable, the canvasman would start a dialogue somewhat like the following:

"Say, how'd you like to go through the ladies' dressing tent?"

"Wall, I wouldn't mind. How can I dew it?"

Peering cautiously about, the canvasman whispers, "I can sell you a ticket."

Having paid, the yokel asks, "Where's the ticket?"

"Oh, you don't need a ticket; all you got to do when you meet a circus man is to raise two fingers; that shows you have a ticket to the ladies' dressing-room."

The raising of two fingers marks him as a sucker for every one around the show; he gets down to the entrance of the dressing tent, is kicked out and that ends it. He doesn't dare complain to the authorities lest he advertise his credulity to his acquaintances.

Often the very razorback who sold him the ticket would be the one to eject him. This was certainly adding insult to injury. I have seen as much as fifty dollars paid for such a ticket to the ladies' dressing tent.

Circus men as a class possess good memories. Let the show unload in the same railroad yard each year, the drivers will pilot the wagons to the lot used the season before, without a single question as to direction. Also they never forget a favor, or forgive an injustice inflicted on them.

"Porky" O'Brien's show was notorious for one thing—a total failure to pay anything to performers or workmen if it was possible to avoid it.

Musicians were generally paid because they were the only men who could tie up the show. Getting money out of the old man was like trying to get "blood out of a turnip." Late one season I overheard a canvasman tackle "Porky" for his overdue salary.

"Money," said the old man. "What do you want with money? Here you are eating three times a day, and getting the wrinkles out of yourself, and now you want money, huh."

"Yes, I know, Mr. O'Brien," said the razorback, "but I want to buy me a shirt."

"Shirt!" snorted the old man. "What's the matter with the one you have on? What do you want with another shirt? But if you're so keen on having two shirts, when we go over the road tonight, find a clothes line and get yourself another. And while you're down there, get me one—I wear a number seventeen."

As luck would have it, the route of the night jump led past a clothes line, stretched in the back yard of a farmer living about two miles from the last lot.

Remembering "Porky's" advice, he hopped over the fence and proceeded to help himself.

Unfortunately for the razorback, the owner of the clothes line, a hard-fisted old deacon, was concealed on his back porch waiting for the return of his two young sons who had sneaked off to the circus against his orders. The culprit was caught red-handed. No amount of persuasion on his part would induce his captor to let him go. The law must be respected, and to jail he must go.

He was suddenly struck with an idea. It was the end of the circus season, and the prospect of a hard winter lay before him. He could get no worse break from the farmer if he offered to work for his board and keep than he was getting from the circus owner; besides, here was a chance of warm and comfortable sleeping quarters, a luxury he would not be able to enjoy in the city. The deal was made. In exchange for a pardon, board and keep, the razorback was to do the daily chores during the coming winter. Seemingly he was perfectly satisfied with his lot, and the deacon on his part was highly entertained with stories of the circus told by the canvasman, while the family sat around a crackling log fire in the open grate.

But the lure of the life under the billowing

canvas of the white tops is ever appealing. The razorback longed for the old associations as soon as spring came and the bluebirds began to sing.

Early in the season, the O'Brien show was billed in a near-by town, and the call was overwhelming. Much to his surprise the deacon suggested that the entire family go over on circus day. As the canvasman knew all about the circus, he would be included. Bright and early, they set out, driving a pair of perfectly matched horses which the deacon hoped to sell to the circus for a good price.

Here was an opportunity to get revenge. With the plea that he knew how to beat the shell game, he persuaded the old deacon to back him in bucking it. In less than ten minutes all the cash received from the sale of the horses reposed safely in the pocket of the shell man. When it came time for the deacon to go home the razorback was missing and a careful search failed to disclose his whereabouts. Concealed within a baggage wagon, safe from the prying eyes of the law, the shell game man and the razorback divided the fruits of their labor fifty-fifty. The canvasman marked the score paid in full.

Pilfering gangs were pretty well organized in those days. If they were unable to locate the lucre, a tall ministerial-looking gentleman stood sedately on a soap box near the entrance to the tent and gave forth this admonition, *"L-a-d-i-e-s* and *g-e-n-t-l-e-m-e-n,* I appear before you on behalf of the circus management. The *gentlemanly* proprietors request me to advise you that among this large gathering there are a number of thieves and pickpockets, and I am *requested* by the management to advise you to keep your hands upon your pocketbooks." Thus warned, it was only natural that his hearers did put their hand on their pocketbooks. With the location of the money pointed out to them, nothing was easier for the pickpockets than the getting possession of it.

The "guess your weight" machines were first brought into use by these light-fingered gentlemen to assist in locating the money they later stole. These machines, made in platform style, were used for this nefarious purpose years before the ones having a swinging seat and dial appeared at beach amusement resorts.

The appeal to get weighed free, was made to men only; to locate the purse of a woman, wearing

voluminous skirts such as were in style in those days was a feat that not even a professional pickpocket could accomplish. And again, was there ever a woman who would consent to being weighed in public?

Grasping the victim by the shoulders, the genial gentleman of the scales began to feel the body of the candidate carefully under the pretense of determining the solidity of his flesh. He slapped him on the thigh, hip and chest, at the same time saying, "I *think* you weigh," or "I *guess* your weight to be," or "I'll *say* you weigh," etc. The words *think, guess* and *say* were easily interpreted by his confederate to mean the location of the dupe's pocketbook. *Think* meant the money was in the coat pocket; *guess,* the trousers pocket; and *say,* the hip pocket. The money rarely escaped changing hands.

Farmers were not the only victims of these nimble-fingered gentry. They tackled both great and small, high and low, shrewd and simple. The sophisticated were just as easy for them as the ingenuous.

Shortly after retiring to private life, I became quite friendly with Charles E. Van Loan, the well-

known writer of sport stories. Notwithstanding Van's experience acquired in his profession, he was as impressionable as a schoolgirl. As he lived on the next block to me, we were often together, and many of the incidents mentioned here were made the basis for some of his very interesting stories.

Like all grown-up boys he was much interested in the circus, and one night suggested we visit a small circus then showing in Brooklyn. Arriving at the grounds, he said: "Here, Bob, you're up on the ways of the circus, I'll give you the money to buy the tickets."

"Now," said I, "wait a minute, and I'll probably see some one I know who will give us passes."

He complained that all that would take time, and reached for the roll of bills which he always carried.

"Now," I said, "Charlie, don't pull that roll out in this crowd. There are always a lot of 'dips' around a circus and you are likely to have your pockets picked."

"Who, me?" he asked. "Why I've traveled all over the world reporting prize fights, horse races, and baseball games, mixing in all sorts of tough crowds, and I've never yet been frisked." He

laughed long and loud and peeled off a bill from the roll and handed it to me to buy the tickets.

As I went past the ticket wagon, I spied a pick-pocket who in years gone by had followed one of the tent shows I was with. This man had the reputation of being one of the smoothest short-change artists in the business. Here was a chance to teach Van a lesson. I got the "dip's" eye, pointed to Van Loan and wigwagged the location of his money. In a good dark place, I gave Van a prodigious shove and—the "dip" got the money.

Branding me a "clumsy old fool," we passed into the menagerie top, where Van suggested he buy reserved seats. This time I did not oppose him. He again reached for the roll—but the roll was gone. The bull of Bashan roared no longer or louder than he. It wasn't so much the loss of the money, but he was peeved by the fact that he, of all persons, had had his pocket picked. I joshed him a bit and that made him all the madder. Then I said, "Now, Van, I don't think your money was stolen; I think it came out of your pocket when I stumbled against you. You stay here, and I think I can go right back and pick it up."

He insisted on going back with me, but I

prevailed upon him to let me go alone. It was a good while before I could find the man, but I finally located him in the horse top.

"Well, Tom," I said, "I guess you'll have to come across. The sucker is making an awful squawk. He is a very good friend of mine, and I was only trying to teach him a lesson."

He handed me the roll intact, and I gave him ten dollars from my own pocket which seemed to satisfy him. I found Van Loan where I had left him and handed him the money, remarking: "It was just as I said; I found it right where you dropped it. Now put it in your pocket and keep it there."

It was some months before I could get up sufficient courage to tell him the truth. He listened to me in silence while I related it to him. From his facial expression I could readily see that he did not believe me; when I had finished he said: "I've met a lot of liars in my time, but you've got them all lashed to the mast howling for mercy. They couldn't pick my pocket in a hundred years."

Like Balzac and Dickens, Van had a hard time getting publishers to believe in him. At the beginning of his career as a writer, manuscript after

manuscript was returned to him with the endorsement "Many thanks, not available for our use at present," and "Good story, but not suited to our publication," etc.

So regularly did the practise continue that Van began to fear that his scripts were not being read. In order to test his suspicion, he pasted the first three sheets of a manuscript together and sent it in to the publication office of a prominent periodical.

In due course of time back came the script with the first three pages still stuck together, just as he had despatched them. Boiling with righteous wrath, he indited an excoriating epistle to the editor, in which he expressed his belief that his manuscript had been returned without being read, and cited as proof the three pages pasted together.

The editor replied promptly: "Dear Mr. Van Loan: When I open my egg at breakfast, and find it bad, I do not eat *all* of it to satisfy myself. I read the first page of your manuscript."

Best of all sure-fire losers for the player was the "Spinning Jinney." There was not a chance in the world for the customer to beat it, unless the operator saw fit to let him win.

This gambling device was very simply constructed. A large wooden arrow having a metal point was balanced perfectly on a pivot set in the center of a round piece of wood, having about the same diameter as a barrel head. Around the outer edge of the circular board were laid one, five and ten-dollar bills, interspersed with watches and a collection of cheap miscellaneous jewelry. Between the prizes were small brass buttons, each connected with the others by hidden wires centering in a metal terminal. The operator carried a small set of batteries in his pocket, wired to a metal button on his vest. The terminal on the board and the button on his vest were directly opposite.

Seated with the layout in front of him, he exhorted the crowd to spin the arrow. His spiel was always the same:

"Round and round she goes,
Where she stops nobody knows."

One dollar was the usual charge for spinning the arrow.

When it was desired the capper should win, the operator leaned back. When the sucker played, the proprietor, under the pretense of watching the

arrow, leaned forward until the two metal buttons touched, which energized the circuit, and the metal point of the arrow invariably came to rest over a blank.

For two hours before the circus performance opened, the busiest men on the lot were those who sold special admission and reserved seat tickets to avoid the rush at the box office, charging an advance of ten cents per ticket. The public looked on this as a great favor on the part of the management. Had they thought to count their change from a five or ten-dollar bill, they would have changed their opinion. As much as twenty-five dollars per day was paid for this privilege.

For large profits the men who sold electric belts, supposed to restore lost vitality to the aged, had all the other fakirs backed off the boards. These men usually worked up-town between parade time and afternoon performance. They possessed just enough knowledge of medicine and anatomy to make their talk appeal. The belts had absolutely no galvanic value. They were fashioned from ordinary canvas or duck cloth, to which several small circular pieces of tin were attached. In order to simulate electricity capsicum vaseline or

red pepper was rubbed on the tin disks, which, when coming in contact with the skin, produced a slight burning sensation, and this was mistaken for galvanism.

Knowing that many of his hearers would be reluctant to come forward in public and thus disclose their disabilities to their neighbors, the fakir gave glowing descriptions of a special belt, which he sold only at his hotel. This belt he urged all to inspect without the assumption of any obligation on their part. The article he sold at his hotel differed from the one sold on the street in only one particular. The price was five dollars instead of one.

Jewelry or silverware was usually the merchandise sold by street fakirs with the circus for the reason that there were few experts in these lines among his audience.

His "pitch" set, and an audience collected, he would begin:

"Ladies and gentlemen, I appear before you this afternoon for the purpose of promulgating publicity for the Syracuse Silverware Company, the *l-a-r-g-e-s-t* manufacturers of this product on this mundane sphere.

"I choose to address you on circus day for the reason that I can reach a greater number of astute people on that day. The firm which I represent pays *all* the cost of advertising. I have here a genuine sterling silver spoon plated over white metal. I will now demonstrate and prove that assertion."

Taking the spoon in his left hand and a large pair of tinner's shears in his right, he would cut the spoon in half at the shank, the rough shears pulling the cheap plating over the cut ends and giving the erroneous impression of white metal.

"You see, ladies and gentlemen, just as I told you, 'quadruple' plating on white metal, guaranteed to last a lifetime. Now who will give me the advertising price of one dime for this dollar article?"

Several confederates would promptly purchase, while he as promptly would deliver the spoons and return the money with the merchandise, producing mild excitement among the audience. Note that at no time during his hectic harangue, would he agree to return the money, but he did so nevertheless.

"Now, good p-e-e-p-u-l, we will offer as a matter

of advertising for my wonderful firm a half-dozen of these superb spoons for a quarter of a dollar." This time a confederate is not necessary. A dozen or two gullible persons would rush forward, receive their spoons, and have their money returned. Then a limited number of forks put up in half-dozen to the package would be sold for a half-dollar and the money returned to the purchasers. Excitement become a furor.

"And now, l-a-d-i-e-s and gentlemen, I will proceed to present to you the crowning climax of this most marvelous and magnificent campaign. Before I do so, I want all the hard-shell Shylocks with shoe strings around their pocketbooks to move on. I want only *large hearted, public spirited* citizens to have the opportunity to avail themselves of this wonderful advertising proposition which I will now unfold to you in detail."

Picking out his own watch, a very good one, from among a large grip full of cheap cases, he would proceed: "Now here is a watch containing seventeen ruby jewels, adjusted to synchronism, all oscillations of the body, is heat and cold, steam and dust proof. The case is made of a rolling of pure gold swaged over a composition of white gold, and

guaranteed for twenty years. As an advertisement, I will proceed to pass these watches out among you generous and genial gentlemen at the unbelievable price of one dollar each. Please remember that you are not to open them for your stingy neighbor's inspection, until I have finished the distribution of this wonderful bargain bonanza. To all those holding wrapped watches after the sale is ended, I am going to give a gorgeous present. Will the marshal of your pretty little city please come forward and receive the money while the sale is in progress?"

I have seen these men pass out as many as two hundred of these worthless watch-cases in a single pitch. Men who were careful and close dealing in their business clawed their way through the crowd of women and children in a mad scramble to get something for nothing. I have seen prominent people of the town slyly open their purchase, see they were skinned, and straightway induce their neighbor to invest in order to keep from being derided for their credulity. The cases were merely gilded metal which had been stamped out by machinery at an approximate cost of fifteen cents each.

"And now, ladies and gentlemen," he would continue, "I promised to present each and every one holding watches a gorgeous gift," says the fakir. "Well, I will now do so." Whereupon there is extreme excitement among the easy marks who expect to have their money returned as in the case of the spoons. Vain hope!

"I could give you a brick house, a toothpick, or a match. That would be a present, would it not? But I will be more generous than this. To all those holding watches, I will present one of these gold wedding rings which sell at five dollars in regular jewelry stores. In closing I wish to say that I will be on this spot to-night at seven o'clock prepared to continue this wonderful campaign. Go home, relate your good fortune to your friends, and bring them with you to-night."

Promptly at the time specified, he would again appear and proceed in a manner similar to his afternoon program. His former victims would be there to a man, each with a firm determination to give him the horse laugh when he offered his watches for sale. But he never went that far. He always stopped at the fork sale, one notch below, and got two pitches out of the same crowd in one

day. He was rarely ever arrested because no purchaser was willing to draw the ridicule of his neighbor by admitting that he was a customer.

I often watched these gentlemen work, and marveled at their nerve. So sore were their victims that I expected any minute to see them roughly handled. The only thing that saved them was the customer's fear of derision.

A clever prestidigitator was necessary when a soap game was operated. The better the sleight of hand performer, the greater the success. This game consisted in wrapping five or ten twenty-dollar bills around rectangular pieces of soap, enclosing them in blue litmus paper, and apparently dropping them into a small grip suspended from the operator's neck by a strap. In the satchel were perhaps a couple of dozen rectangular packages wrapped in the same way. These were blanks. As a matter of fact, the packages containing money were either not dropped in the satchel at all, the operator cleverly palming them and dropping in blanks instead, or else were so manipulated in the satchel that the victim could not reach them. One, two or three dollars was charged for making a draw. As the customer withdrew his hand containing his

selection, it would be grabbed by the operator, who offered him first one, then five, and finally ten dollars for his choice. Feeling sure he had the grand prize of twenty dollars in his hand he refused, only to find on opening the package that he had drawn a blank.

The operator expected to be, and usually was, arrested in every town in which he worked; but was generally acquitted because he was able to show he had offered the player (before he opened the package) more money than he paid for his chance.

The only person I ever knew to beat the soap game was Elbert Hubbard—Fra Elbertus. Frequently when business was dull, the proprietor, in order to create the impression that the game was on the level, would hand the real money packages to some bystander to drop in the bag. The "Fra" once happened to be the one selected to drop the grand prize in the bag.

At that particular time Mr. Hubbard was eating some juicy grapes from a bag in his hand; in the act of dropping the packages, he noticed that the grape juice on his fingers put pink spots on the paper wherever he touched it. This escaped the notice of the flim-flam man. When the offer was

made to draw, Mr. Hubbard paid his money, carefully and calmly stirred the packages until he uncovered the ones with the pink spots, and walked away with the "bacon."

The star performer of the entire lot of these circus fakirs of old times was a man I shall call "Rawbone" Ferguson because it was not his name. Rawbone was positively the best manipulator of the three-card monte game I ever knew, and I have known a lot of them in my time. He never worked on circus day, but began operations the next morning. Boarding an early train the next day dressed as a farmer boy, he took a seat in the smoking car. As the train got under way big tears would begin to trickle down his cheeks and his great frame would be shaken with sobs. In a short while a kind-hearted fellow traveler would stop to inquire the cause of his grief, dropping perhaps a word or two of condolence.

"Wall," Rawbone would say between sobs, "my dad sent me down to (naming the town where the circus had shown the day before) to sell a car load of cattle. I sold the cattle, got into a three-card monte game with some circus gamblers and lost all the money. I 'low dad will just about kill me when

I get home." Whereupon his grief would burst out anew, and others would gather round.

"Oh, well," his comforters would say, "I wouldn't take it so hard. You'll get over it in time, and no doubt your experience will prove a good lesson to you."

"Anyhow," Rawbone would reply, "I learned the game well enough to skin the boys when I get home."

Partly to comfort him, and also to find out just how clever he might be at the game, they would request that he demonstrate it to them.

Acting on the suggestion, Rawbone would select three jacks from a pack of cards and awkwardly throw them face down on the cushions of the car seat.

With much laughter at his blundering efforts, his fellow travelers would pick up the winning jack every time.

"That's queer," Rawbone would remark, "I thought I'd learned her better than that. Let's try her again." The next time it would not be so easy; the wrong jack would be selected, and again it would be tried.

In less than a half-hour, the seeming farmer

boy would skin them out of four or five hundred dollars, get off the train at the next stop, and leave them believing they had been trimmed by a youthful yokel.

These few anecdotes should prove to persons of average intellect that no confidence man travels round the country with a game the public can beat.

Often the simplest-looking game was the biggest skin. The red and black wheel, which all men over fifty can no doubt remember, was one of these. Who of us does not recall the operator as he sat on a high stool, his eagle eye glued on the layout in front of him as he made his spiel?

"*C-o-m-e o-n, boys.* Even money on the red or black, and five to one on the star green. There's twenty-one blacks and twenty-one reds, and five star greens. *C-o-m-e o-n, boys,* who else can guess it out now for a quarter, half or a dollar? Are you all down? All down. Let her roll. R-o-l-l! The black wins!"

When the machine stopped on the black, there was more money on the red, and vice versa. The proprietor had a secret infallible method of stopping it on the color which would win for him.

These old skin-games are a thing of the past.

Not only are they no longer permitted with the big tent attractions of to-day, but it is to be seriously questioned whether or not a sufficient number of unsophisticated persons could be secured to play them. The telephone, radio and automobile have been great educators of the class on whom these fakirs depended to unload their wares in the years gone by.

CHAPTER IX

"THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH"

T. BARNUM was the first to exhibit Hippodrome races in this country. The building in which they were run was built in 1874 and was called "P. T. Barnum's Great Roman Hippodrome."

It occupied the entire block bounded by Madison and Fourth Avenues, Twenty-sixth and Twenty-seventh Streets, New York City. On this site, Madison Square Garden stood later. The building was of brick, four hundred and twenty-six feet long, two hundred feet wide, and twenty-eight feet high, cased with iron. The incline for seats was covered with asbestos, while the floors were of cement. The ring was eighty-four by two hundred and seventy feet, the center being decorated with fountains, statuary and flowers.

Among the foyer decorations was a sago palm over one hundred years old, brought from Mount Vernon, the home of General George Washington.

The track on which the races were run was thirty feet wide, and a fifth of a mile in length. William C. Coup was the general manager and Samuel H. Hurd acted as treasurer. Across Fourth Avenue stood the old Libby and Washington Hotels. Room and board could be obtained at either for twenty-one dollars per week. The performance embraced a Congress of Nations, chariot, hurdle and Roman standing races. One of the features was Monsieur Joignerey, who concluded his act by lifting two horses while suspended from a trapeze.

Naturally opinions differ as to who was the greatest showman. Here and now, I wish to declare myself emphatically in favor of the versatile and enterprising Phineas Taylor Barnum for that honor. I consider him the greatest genius that ever conducted an amusement enterprise in this country, a man of superlative imagination, indomitable pluck and artistic temperament. For nearly twenty years, I had an opportunity to study him at close range, and never once did I see him falter

in anything he set out to do. I did not appreciate him then, but I can now see that he possessed talent far greater than any man in his line—living or dead.

People liked him and followed him, even when they knew he was humbugging them. I grant that many of his freak offerings *were* humbugs, but they were always harmless. What harm was there in the "woolly horse," the "Feejee Mermaid," or the "Sacred White Elephant from Siam"? The greater the fake, the more people laughed; the more they laughed, the better the advertisement.

Who is the showman to-day that can deliver a sermon from the pulpit, give a lecture, or be elected to represent his district in the Legislature?

Mr. Barnum was as much at home in the presence of royalty as in the company of plebeians. Thousands of people appreciated him more for his moral character, his charity and his charming personality, than for the exhibitions he gave. He was a fine robust-looking man. I would not call him handsome—but he had a smile and a gentle sympathy that made friends all over the world. Time and time again, I have seen him pacify belligerent men and women, who, for some fancied grievance,

had threatened to do all sorts of things, from bringing civil action to inflicting bodily injury. Quite often, he rode in the parade. On such occasions, "There's Barnum! Hurrah for Barnum!" would be heard all along the line. A glimpse of Barnum was deemed equivalent to seeing any of the big features of the show.

He possessed the true Yankee spirit of trade. In the game of barter and sale, he was a past master, except when it came to buying and selling horses. One of his friends, commenting on his energy, said, "If he was shipwrecked and thrown on a desert island, he would try to sell maps of the island to the inhabitants." There were no press agents in Mr. Barnum's day. He acted as his own, and there never was a better. He knew the value of printer's ink and the men who used it. The best thing I think he ever got over in print was the story of the elephant which was put to plowing on his estate near Bridgeport, Connecticut. Keeper and elephant were stationed on a six-acre lot which lay close beside the tracks of the New York and New Haven railroad. The man was furnished with a time-table of the road and given instructions to be busily engaged in plowing, whenever passen-

ger trains passed. The act made a sensation, and the showman gravely announced that he intended to introduce a herd of elephants to do all his plowing and heavy draft work. Editors of agricultural papers all over the United States came to Bridgeport to interview Mr. Barnum as to the value of the elephant to the farmer. Two questions were invariably asked: "How much does he eat, and how much does he draw?" "Draw?" replied Mr. Barnum. "He can draw the attention of millions of people to the Greatest Show on Earth."

It seems passing strange that no public-spirited citizen has conceived the idea of erecting a bronze bust or life-size statue of the man who provided pleasure for the masses in a degree unattained by any other American citizen.

So much has been written and so much has been said of and about P. T. Barnum, that there is very little left to be added that is true. At regular periods some one feels an impelling urge to bombard the memory of Barnum by writing something untrue about the greatest showman that ever lived. "There's a sucker born every minute," is a slang phrase, always attributed to Mr. Barnum. The great impresario never expressed himself in this

manner. Primarily, the word "sucker" as a slang slogan was not in use during Barnum's lifetime. His favorite expression was "the American people like to be humbugged." Another untruth usually dragged into these stories is the declaration that he was a libertine, and consequently lived unhappily with his family. These scurrilous and scandalous assertions are made for sensational reasons only and embrace not a trace of truth. There never lived a man more lovable in his family than Mr. Barnum. Their comfort and care was his first consideration. In all his public and private life, there was not a scintilla of scandal, and he was honored and respected by men and women in every walk of life.

The idea of putting out a traveling railroad circus did not originate with Mr. Barnum. It was conceived in the mind of W. C. Coup, one-time manager of Barnum's Hippodrome, who was appointed manager of his first circus, which was established in 1873. The outfit carried, in addition to the conventional acts, a museum and a gallery of pictures and statuary, the whole being billed as "the last crowning triumph of my managerial career."

Don Castello was the premier pantomimist and jester. The roster also included D'Atalie, the first iron-jawed man, Romeo Sebastian, principal equestrian, Mademoiselle Zazel, the human cannon ball, and Fred and Madame Aymar, clever comedy readers.

No description of Barnum's first circus can be considered complete without mention of Ben Lusbie, the lightning ticket seller, whose achievement in disposing of six thousand tickets per hour was one of the sensational features of the free show. The tickets were made of heavy card-board and could be handled much quicker than those in use at the present day. The admission fee was fifty cents, and tickets were given gratis to purchasers of the *Life of P. T. Barnum,* reduced from three dollars and fifty cents to one dollar and fifty cents. The old boy exploited every source of revenue.

During our London engagement of the Barnum Circus, the royal box was unoccupied until the last week of our engagement, despite the efforts and wire-pulling exerted by "P. T." We had about given up hope that our desire would be gratified, when an imposing-looking envelope bearing the royal seal was delivered to the box office

by the Royal Equerry, resplendent in a gaudy uniform trimmed with gold and lace.

The enclosure notified us that Her Royal Majesty Queen Victoria, accompanied by the Prince of Wales (afterward King Edward VII), the Duke and Duchess of York, and the ladies and gentlemen of the Royal Household, "would do themselves the honor" of attending the performance on the following afternoon.

I remarked that the notice should have stated "in anticipation of much pleasure," but the irrepressible Tody Hamilton replied that "the phrase was unknown in the bright lexicon of royalty."

This was a very simple statement, coming as it did from Tody, whose language was usually so polysyllabic that an Oxford professor would have found it difficult to understand. As for the Prince of Wales, I am sure he would have preferred attending unannounced, as he was exceedingly democratic in speech, dress and manner. Our star broncho-buster, Bucky Taylor, often met him while both were riding Rotten Row, and the prince unfailingly halted to listen to Bucky's discourse on horses in general, and bronchos in particular.

Bucky had it all framed up to take a led

broncho with him some morning as the prince had expressed a desire to ride one, but our equestrian director got wind of it and put a stop to it; so the Duke of York missed a chance to succeed to the throne, as Old Steamboat, the meanest piece of horseflesh ever foaled, was the broncho chosen for the event.

When the notice was read to the company much excitement prevailed. Everybody got out his other shirt and put an extra polish on his celluloid collar. Men who had never been known to take a bath since "joining out" showed up that afternoon smelling as sweet as new mown hay, which led the loquacious Hamilton to remark that "they looked like they had suffered a landslide."

For an hour before the distinguished guests arrived there was almost a fight for peeping places of advantage. Before the grand entry the performers were called together and duly admonished as to their behavior while doing their acts. "Remember, do not approach closer than twenty feet to the royal box. Be sure to salute the royal party before and after you enter the ring," etc.

Everything proceeded according to instructions until my turn came. I had read that court

jesters of old were accorded a license not given to others of the royal attendants. I was suddenly struck with an idea. Glancing over to where Mr. Barnum was standing at the music stand, I saw that my every movement was being watched, but I remembered the old adage, "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." Walking over to within ten feet of the box, I grotesquely pantomimed the cleaning of my hands by vigorously rubbing them on my costume. Putting on my most engaging grin, I walked right up to the box and suddenly proffered my hand to the queen.

It was a tense moment. Out of the corner of my eye I could see Mr. Barnum jumping around like a chicken on a hot griddle; for about two seconds my heart was in my mouth. The queen, however, fell into the humor of the situation, and most graciously extended her hand, which I took lightly in mine, the incident bringing thunderous applause from a packed house. Turning quickly, I ran to the ring bank, airily kissed my finger-tips first to the royal party, then to the audience, and jumped into the ring for my act. Mr. Barnum was so upset that he would not allow me to go on again that afternoon. He was pleased at the outcome, but

said, "If you go on again, how do I know you won't invite her out to dinner?" The queen was such a motherly-looking lady that had I been a hungry child I should not have hesitated to ask her for a piece of bread and molasses.

We showed at only one town in Scotland—Edinburgh. The attendance was so poor that we thought it best not to tempt fate by going farther. In an effort to dissuade Tody Hamilton from booking us in Dunkirk, "P. T." told him "there was a Jew who had been in business there for forty years, and couldn't make enough money to get out."

As Hamilton was relieved from making further bookings in Scotland, he took tickets for that week. He had so many altercations about half-rate, or children's, tickets, that he threw up his hands on Friday and quit, declaring that he caught a Scotchman sprinkling powdered alum on his fifteen-year-old boy in an effort to shrink him to half-ticket size.

"Well," said P. T., "that story convinces me that the farthing was coined in order that the Scotch may be philanthropic when they visit London."

From Edinburgh we went to Dublin and Bel-

fast, in Ireland. Poverty and Pat seemed synonymous, yet they patronized the show to a man. The money received for many a pig and potato sold on market day went to pay for a ticket to the show. Young and old were more interested in the animals than in the circus. They made the rounds of the menagerie top several times and, as but few were able to read the names of the animals which were hung on the cages, they asked many questions of the attendant.

They knew lions, tigers and elephants, but when they came to a cage of hyenas they were stumped. Gazing in silence for some time, a big broth of an Irish boy said to the attendant:

"I say, me lad, what sort of beast is that?"

"That," replied the man, "is the laughing hyena."

"The laughing what?"

"The laughing hyena," repeated the attendant.

"Well," said Pat, "phat the divil he's got to laugh about is more than I can tell, for he's the most sorrowful-looking spalpeen I iver saw."

When they came to the cage of the hippopotamus, they were stumped again. The animal was ticketed "The Behemoth of Holy Writ." B-e-h-e-

m-o-t-h, one laboriously spelled aloud. "Well, begorrah," said he, "be he a 'moth' or be he not, I don't know. But if he *be* a moth, be-jabers, I'd hate to be bit by a flea in the country he came from."

Mr. Barnum had been in Dublin several times before, when he was exhibiting Tom Thumb, and knew the city quite well. He invited several of us the next Sunday for a ride around the city, to see the places of interest. Taking a jaunting car, we drove around the streets, and he pointed out to us a number of historic spots.

Passing the Post-Office, Tody Hamilton noticed four imposing-looking statues on the top of the building. Not desiring to miss anything of importance, he called out to our Jehu:

"I say, Pat, what figures are those on the top of that building?"

"Oh, thim," said Pat with great serenity, "are the twilve apostles."

"The twelve apostles your grandmother," returned Tody, "there are only four of them."

"Well," said Pat urbanely, "the other eight are on the inside sorting out the mail—you wouldn't want thim all up there at wan time."

About two miles out of Dublin, we stopped and entered a little church, covered with moss and vines. The services had already begun, and our entrance created considerable excitement, which took on the aspect of a panic when the amount of our liberal donation was whispered throughout the congregation.

Just before the sermon began, the clerk of the parish, a very pompous little man, resembling in his bearing nothing so much as a small bantam rooster, arose to read off the notices. One could readily see that he posed as an orator throughout the parish.

In a thin nervous voice, he notified his hearers of the various happenings throughout the week in the neighborhood and proceeded to read off the names of persons to be baptized. Striking as majestic a pose as his stature permitted, he said: "Immejitly after the sarvices this marnin', there will be three people baptized in front of the fountain—one adult, and two adulteresses."

Early in April of that season we closed our tour of Great Britain and left Liverpool on the steamship *Minnehaha,* in order to get home in time for the tenting season in the States. Nearly all the

animals used in our London engagement except the ring stock and a few working elephants had been rented from Sanger of London and were returned to him before our tour of the Provinces began.

Our troubles with the elephants started right at the dock. Old Empress and Tippoo Saad had stood the trip over very nicely, as we had had fair weather and a smooth sea; nevertheless they put up a stubborn resistance against going to sea again.

As soon as the dock came in sight, Empress lay right down in the street and refused to budge for two whole days and nights. Coaxing, prodding and beating, all failed of results. Hundreds of suggestions were offered and a few were tried—but nothing moved her. She refused to walk and that settled it. There was no hoisting apparatus then such as we have now for loading animals on ships. It was out of the question to drag a five-ton elephant two hundred and fifty feet along a pier and over a gangplank. It began to look as though we might have to sail without her, when George Conklin, her trainer, hit upon a happy idea.

In all her trips between train and lot, she had

been accompanied by an old gray horse, ridden by her keeper. The horse was brought from the hold of the steamer and placed about fifty feet from the old girl, with his head carefully pointed away from the dock.

When all was in readiness, Conklin mounted the horse and blew a shrill whistle which was always used as a signal to march either to or from the lot when we were on the road. Empress threw her head high over her shoulder, saw the horse, arose immediately and came alongside; Conklin hastily hooked her by the ear and hustled her over the back trail and up toward the city. He led her over a circuitous route until she was again headed toward the dock through a different street.

Just before she came in sight of the dock, Conklin blindfolded her, and stuffed her trunk with cotton so she could not smell the water. He led her again toward the steamer, the band playing the old familiar march to which she did her act. As she came on to the pier old Tippoo was brought alongside, one of the boys thrust a hunk of hay into her trunk, and the whole party of horses, elephants and men were got safely on board.

"Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned" did

not begin to describe the actions of that old lady when she found herself bound hard and fast to the ship's stanchions. She trumpeted, screeched and struck at every one who came in sight, and only desisted when she became so seasick she was unable to carry on the fight.

There is no more pitiable sight in the world, in my estimation, than a seasick elephant. Her eyes rolled, she trembled like a leaf, and her entire body was covered by a cold perspiration. She would not lie down, evidently for fear of going through the bottom of the ship. She neither ate nor drank during the entire fourteen days of the voyage and was so weak at the finish, she could hardly walk down the gangplank when we landed in New York at the foot of Canal Street.

One of the prettiest little domestic dramas I ever witnessed took place on the dock just after we landed. As the ship neared the harbor, one of our acrobats, who had sent his wife over several months ahead, became very nervous and ill at ease. He constantly paced back and forth on the boat deck, every now and then asking of the crew, "How long now before we land?" He was the first man over the gangplank; when he entered the dock house, a

handsome young woman rushed up to him, kissed him affectionately, at the same time placing a very much bundled up young infant in his arms, as she whispered, "I knew you just couldn't wait to see her, Jim, so I brought her down to meet you."

So anxious were we to get to our old haunts, Pete Conklin and I did not wait for anything—not even for our personal belongings. We strolled leisurely off the dock, across West Street, and wandered along Canal to the Bowery, taking in all our old familiar places as we walked along.

When we got to the old lamp-post which stood in front of Steve Brodie's place, where many circus men met in days gone by, I confess without shame that I was so glad to get back to the old haunts, that I got down and kissed the curb—and Pete did not laugh at me either. Then we had a good dinner in Beefsteak John's place, after which we started on a tour of Chatham Square, Five Points and Baxter Street which lasted until four o'clock in the morning. It certainly made us feel good to get back. I suggested to Pete that we get some breakfast and hit for Hoboken to get our baggage off the *Minnehaha,* but Conklin said: "You go, Bob. As for me, I'm afraid to get on even a ferry-

boat again for fear the fool thing might head for England."

That ended our circus career. Neither of us donned the dots after that season. I made some money, Conklin lost his, but he was self-supporting until the end. He died in 1924, happy and cheerful to the last. No man ever lived who loved children more than old Pete Conklin. Their childish laughter was a tonic to him during his declining days.

For a few years prior to his death, he acted as a barker for the incubator baby show in Luna Park, at Coney Island. He never went on or off duty without taking a peek at the little mites of humanity who were struggling for life under adverse circumstances. He was as solicitous of their welfare as if he had been their real father.

Pete Conklin is dead. He was perhaps not the greatest clown that ever lived, but he was a prime laughmaker. In his sober moments he was a sage. The professional fool must indeed be a wise man. He was known and loved as the "Shakespearian" clown and no man was better entitled to bear that euphonious appellation. Unschooled, scarcely able to read and write, yet by contact with the world he acquired an education and polish that any college graduate would have been pleased to possess.

When differences arose between members of the company, Pete Conklin was always chosen to settle the dispute. His decision was invariably accepted as final, and he never betrayed their trust in him. He died happy, because he had spread happiness throughout life.

Our London engagement had begun shortly after Henry M. Stanley's return from his last trip to Africa. The great explorer was then giving a series of lectures on his experiences in the Dark Continent. A number of these lectures were attended by Mr. Barnum and Tody Hamilton. Mr. Stanley told of the royal reception given his party by Marimba, king of one of the principal African tribes. The royal band played on instruments fashioned from hollow logs of various lengths and sizes, each log sounding a different note when struck by a wooden mallet in the hand of the musician. The result was the production of music so weird and wild as to startle one hearing it for the first time. This description gave "P. T." an idea for a novelty which he proceeded to work out, saying nothing to any one until he had it perfected.

When the circus went on tour through the States the following season, Mr. Barnum had his

new idea ready to spring on the unsuspecting and credulous public. With the assistance of a few musicians and a metal worker he concocted an instrument very similar to the xylophone, and had a tinsmith manufacture tone amplifiers for each metal bar.

Next he procured three very black negroes having some musical genius and coached them in the rudiments of playing the instruments.

By the time the circus was ready to open they were fairly proficient in evoking a number of quaint and queer-sounding chords from the noise-maker.

The next step was the making up of the darkies to represent dusky warriors from darkest Africa. This he did by shaving portions of their scalps and putting a ring in each of the noses. He finished up by draping skins of animals over their semi-naked bodies. The negroes, Bowery bred and born, entered into the spirit of the joke, learning a lot of guttural jargon which meant nothing to any one, but lent an atmosphere to the performance.

When all was in readiness, they were placed in the menagerie top, between the cages of some African animals, and this further heightened the effect.

In a large banner over them Mr. Barnum described the spectacle as THE ROYAL MARIMBA BAND. BROUGHT TO ENGLAND BY THE CELEBRATED EXPLORER, HENRY M. STANLEY, BY SPECIAL PERMISSION OF KING MARIMBA OF AFRICA, AND ENGAGED BY BARNUM'S ASIATIC CARAVAN AND MUSEUM OF WONDERS AT AN ENORMOUS SALARY.

The feature was a big success. All the newspapers along the route devoted columns to its description, and thereafter the "Marimba" band became a fixture with at least half a dozen other tent shows.

For several weeks everything went along very smoothly. Suddenly the "musicians" began to show a lack of interest in their work, which increased to such an alarming extent as to induce "P. T." to inquire the reason.

"Well, Mistah Bahnum, dis work is too lonesome," said one.

"Too lonesome? What do you mean? Explain yourself."

"Well, you see, Mistah Bahnum, we isn't allowed to speak to any cullud ladies in English and they thinks we is poh African idiots and won't have nothing to do wif us a-tall. Wif ouah hair all

fussed up freakish like dis, you-all can't blame 'em. Now if you-all will buy us some wigs what we can weah out to pahties after de show, and allow us to talk when we isn't wuking, we sticks—otherwise we quits heah and now."

The wigs were furnished, and the strike of the "Marimba" band was averted.

Mention of this feature is made not so much because of its importance, but to show the ability of the greatest showman in being able to construct an act from any and every source.

Mr. Barnum was positively uncanny in his originality.

The well-known temperance principles of Mr. Barnum presented a shining mark for the shafts of Tody Hamilton's wit. Whenever the occasion presented itself—and that was often—Tody never failed to take a shot at Mr. Barnum's pet hobby.

A party of ten, which included Mr. Barnum, Tody Hamilton, Captain Nate Salsbury and myself, were dining one night in Delmonico's at Ninth Street and University Place, New York City. During the dinner the wine was passed; when the waiter came to Mr. Barnum he put his hand over his glass with the remark:

Samuel Langhorn Clemens (Mark Twain). A life-long friend of the author. From a picture taken by him a few days before Mr. Clemens' death, and now published for the first time.

Fred and Eddie Stone. Their first professional photograph. The author taught them the rudiments of acrobatic work.

"No, thanks, I never touch it."

"I wish I could say that," said Captain Salsbury.

"Well," said Tody Hamilton, "why don't you? P. T. *said* it."

The wine joke rankled in Mr. Barnum's breast. He was very touchy about his pet hobby.

Shortly after, an opportunity came to get even. It was well known to all the members of P. T.'s official family that he had strong hopes of one day finding a singer who could compare favorably with Jenny Lind, the famous Swedish Nightingale.

No one was more energetic in this search than Tody Hamilton. When not on duty he was constantly prodding around music-halls, burlesque and concert shows hoping to uncover a musical prodigy. One morning he bounced into P. T.'s presence in a great state of excitement and began to describe enthusiastically the wonderful voice of a singer he had heard on the previous evening, at a performance of *The Black Crook*. Mr. Barnum was very skeptical of Tody's ability as a vocal critic, but nevertheless agreed to hear the young lady sing on the following evening.

Promptly at eight-thirty the next night, Mr.

Barnum, Mr. Hamilton and several gentlemen recognized as musical critics were ushered into a box at the theater where the young lady in question was filling an engagement. Her number finished, without an encore, the lady bowed herself off the stage with very meager applause.

Mr. Barnum concealed his disappointment behind a mask of imperturbability.

"There!" excitedly exclaimed Tody. "What do you think of her? Didn't I tell you she sang like a nightingale?"

"Yes," laconically replied Mr. Barnum, "she sang like a *night-in-jail.*"

CHAPTER X

REGARDING TOM SAWYER AND SOME OTHERS

I FIRST became acquainted with the author of *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* through a peculiar incident. In 1879 Mark and Bill Nye were on a joint lecture tour under the management of Major Pond, and were billed to speak before the University at Oberlin, Ohio, which at that time was a theological institution.

After the lecture had been delivered, Mark indulged in his favorite vice of smoking, which subjected him to severe censure from the faculty, who claimed he had set a bad example before the students.

The next day the humorists were billed to appear at Bryan, Ohio, where Barnum's Circus was

also exhibiting, with which I was then appearing as a premier clown.

Mr. Clemens attended the afternoon performance and afterward was introduced to the principal performers, myself included, and we sat down on upturned pails outside the pad room, where the ring stock is saddled for performances, and smoked what Mark called Missouri meerschaums, better known as corncob pipes. Mark had with him a calabash pipe, the first that I had ever seen. I admired it greatly, and he pressed me to accept it, which I finally did. I still have it and value it as one of my most prized possessions.

On my asking him how he came to visit the circus, he related the incident of having been criticized for smoking before the students, and in his droll way said "that he thought it was about time for him to look up some people of his own stripe," adding that perhaps he was not so aristocratic as he thought.

I said to him: "So you are the man who corrupted Oberlin?"

He replied that he was and that he believed he could write a story about it, and this incident suggested *The Man Who Corrupted Hadleyburg.*

In about the year 1888 I was attached to the Barnum Show at the Olympic Gardens in London. Mark was also in London at the time, which was shortly after the failure of his publishing business in this country. He was just finishing his manuscript of *Following the Equator*. We met often for walks together through Hyde Park.

The circus was carrying a Wild West Show that season, the first of its kind to be shown in London, with Bucky Taylor as star broncho-buster. His riding created a sensation; he gave many exhibitions before Queen Victoria, thereby acquiring a great deal of publicity.

I suggested to Mark that he do something sensational for the same purpose. He said he would think it over and possibly try something in the near future. On the next morning I was surprised to find him at our usual meeting-place in the park, dressed in pajamas with a bathrobe over them. It is superfluous to state that the incident gave him greater publicity than any other one thing he ever did in his career. The London papers took it up and *Punch* and its cartoonists played it up to the limit.

In 1901 I was conducting a book store at 793

Broadway, New York City, opposite Grace Church. Mark was at that time living at Tenth Street and Fifth Avenue, and used to come around and see me almost every day, and we would have lunch together at the old St. Denis Hotel which was next door; that is, it was lunch for me but breakfast for Mark, who rarely ever arose before noon.

We used to slip into the café for an appetizer. He was not a heavy drinker, but was accustomed to take an eye-opener occasionally. Several times the mixicologist set him out a chaser of water with his drink, which he regularly pushed aside with the remark: "What's the use of starting a fire and putting it right out again?"

It was about this time that his stories began to be printed in English and Canadian editions without his consent. In an effort to put a stop to it, he established a lobby at Washington, which he personally conducted for the purpose of introducing an international copyright bill, saying that they had no more right to take the product of his brain than his horse, sheep or plow.

He was unsuccessful, however, in his effort, as the bill failed to pass and to this day we have no effective international copyright law.

Tom Reed was then Speaker of the House of Congress and was a very good friend of Mark, who told me the following story to show he was able to appreciate a joke on himself. He said: "I got on the train at Jersey City the other day to go to Washington. On the train was a lot of great *big, dirty, greasy* politicians, Tom Reed included. Tom said to me: 'Mark, what *you* goin' to Washington *fer?*' and I said: 'Tom, I am going to Washington to lobby for an international copyright law. Our literary efforts *must* be protected for our posterity.' And Tom Reed, the *great, big, dirty, greasy* politician said to me: 'Great God, Mark, you don't call that stuff you write literature, do you?' "

My wife and I were for many years regular visitors at Stormfield, his country home in Connecticut, where we had an excellent chance to observe him at close range. To know him was to love him. Even-tempered, kind and indulgent, I can not now recall any occasion when he lost his mental equilibrium. For his younger daughter he showed a remarkable affection, equivalent almost to devotion, made stronger perhaps by her affliction. Her sad ending was a shock from which he never fully recovered.

His wife usually passed on his manuscripts before they were sent to his publishers. Like many other good wives she was anxious to have her husband do something in the classical style outside the field of fiction. She was unable to comprehend that Mr. Clemens was a humorist, and never successfully could be anything else; to please her, he wrote *Joan of Arc*—very well done, but probably the least known and read of any of his books.

I asked him why he did not write a continuation of "Huck" and "Tom." He replied that some of the public libraries had thrown "Huck" and "Tom" out because they were liars, and he refused to make them over to suit a lot of old maids who never had a child in their lives. By way of apology for Huck and Tom's white lies he stated that most all children were prevaricators in a mild way and were made so by their superlative imagination, which was so strong that they believed the things they told really happened.

I have ridden in Venetian gondolas to the music of tinkling mandolins; shaken the hands of Queen Victoria and John L. Sullivan, and slept under the stars in the Grand Canyon and the Valley of the Yosemite. I would willingly forego the memory

of them all, could I once again sit outside a circus tent, with the stars twinkling overhead, and listen to Mark Twain tell of his experiences as a pilot on a Mississippi River steamboat.

Picture, if you can, a perfect night in June. Now and again the faint strains of *The Blue Danube Waltz* came to our ears, which told that the Hasselback Brothers were doing their double trapeze act; then the music would change to a lively gallop as Billy Sholes turned backward somersaults on a flying horse, whose broad back was well resined to prevent slipping. There I sat entranced, listening to Mark's stories, until the boom of a gun warned me that Mademoiselle Zazel, the human projectile, had been catapulted from a cannon into the outstretched arms of her assistant, hanging from a trapeze forty feet from her starting point. That was my cue for reappearance, and I tore myself away, only to return at the first opportunity.

Mark Twain repeatedly confessed to me his ambition to become a clown. At first I thought he was joking; later I found he was really in earnest. I ridiculed the idea, and inquired of him why a man who could write such books as he, wanted to become a common clown.

"Well, Bob," he replied, "I think it would be a very satisfying sensation when you come to a ripe old age, to feel and know that you had made people happy—children especially."

At the time I thought him sentimental; but since I have arrived at a sedate age, I have come to know he had the true conception of life—making people happy. I would rather take a hundred hungry, ragged youngsters to the circus, and fill them up on peanuts and lemonade, than attend a big banquet given to royalty.

Mark was never a seeker of cheap notoriety. When honors came upon him, he accepted them with pride but never used them for a mercenary purpose. I feel that he would want no longer epitaph than

Hic jacet Mark Twain:
"His name as short an appendage bare
As Tam O'Shanter's luckless mare."

Early in February in 1881, I found myself in Kansas City, Missouri, after having finished the Crawford Theater circuit with an elephant act. I learned indirectly that Orrin Brothers, who ran a permanent circus in the City of Mexico, wanted a

first-class clown for the season, and I decided to "pull my freight" for Mexico.

The fact that the total sum of my finances amounted to less than ten dollars, and the distance nearly one thousand five hundred miles, did not daunt me in the least. All circus men in those days were experts in "riding the rattlers." While sitting in the office of the old Ninth Street Hotel making my plans, I was approached by a care-free individual with a request for a temporary loan—or in other words, to stake him to a night's lodging. The applicant proved to be none other than the famous Rawbone Ferguson, the old three-card monte man. Rawbone was making his way by easy jumps to New Orleans where the Mardi Gras was on, and wealth abounded. As my way to the City of Mexico led through New Orleans, he suggested that we travel together; so off we went, metaphorically speaking, hand in hand. After two days and nights of travel—mostly nights—as it was easier to ride the "blind baggage" after night—we dropped into the freight yard at Nashville, Tennessee, at about six o'clock on a balmy morning.

Hungry? Well, I guess yes. In the vernacular of Rawbone he could eat S. B. & C. G., which

he explained as meaning "sow belly and coffee grounds." Rawbone volunteered to go up-town and hustle some food and cigars, leaving me to ascertain the time of departure of the next freight, and, if possible, to "soften" up the conductor and brakeman for the next jump. He returned in about an hour with a goodly bag of provender and some cigars—some of them nearly whole ones. In order to get a few he said he was forced to follow the original owners several blocks.

Seating ourselves on piles of newly hewed ties, we broke our matutinal fast as happy monks of old, with not a care that sleep would not cure. And as I look back at the incident to-day, I know that we *were* rich—rich in that the bloom of good health was on our cheeks, the fire of youth coursed through our veins, and our desires in life were few. Like Rabelais of old, famed in song and story, "we had little, owed more—the rest we gave to the poor."

During Rawbone's absence on the foraging expedition I learned from the ticket agent that the next through passenger train was a fight special of ten coaches, en route to New Orlans, bearing no less a personage than the redoubtable John L. Sullivan, the "Boston Strong Boy," who was scheduled

to fight Paddy Ryan for the heavyweight championship of the United States on February 7, 1881.

We were overjoyed. Here was a chance to complete the trip in a blaze of glory. There was only one thorn on our rose-bush; a Nemesis in the shape of the conductor. Rawbone was nothing if not quick-witted. After a few moments of deep thinking he slapped me on the back and said, "I have it, ol' top; get on the train with me and follow my lead."

Candidly, I felt slightly dubious over the outcome. I was fearful that Rawbone's enthusiasm might put us in the position of having to "tell it to the judge."

Nevertheless, when the special pulled in, we piled aboard the smoking car and stuck our heads out the window. When the conductor came through, he gently tapped us on the back for our tickets; in pulling in our heads we adroitly contrived to lose our hats. We immediately set up a roar that our through checks were stuck in our hatbands. The conductor was skeptical—very skeptical;—so skeptical in fact that he declared his intention of putting us off at the next station. The situation was critical—in fact, painful. To miss

not only the chance of a free ride to New Orleans on a fight special but the fight itself, would surely be nothing less than a catastrophe. With his back to the wall, Rawbone made his star bluff. He demanded to be taken before John L., himself, in order to prove we left New York on the special and had been duly supplied with through tickets.

Sullivan grasped the situation at a glance and vociferously asserted that our statement was true, and furthermore, if we got off he got off. That settled it—we stayed.

That was my first sight of the afterward famous fighter and Fistiana's leading exponent. As I sat watching him pickling his hands, I thought I had never before seen a more striking example of brute strength. I found him to be of a surly disposition, smiling only on rare occasions.

Pickling the hands in strong brine was a necessary thing among bare knuckle fighters of the days when London prize ring rules governed. The practise prevented injury to the hands and made them cruel weapons of offense.

We had no more than got comfortably seated after our run-in with the conductor, when Rawbone began to mourn over the loss of his hat. On

that official's next trip through the train, Ferguson inquired of him what chance he had for the recovery of his lost head-gear. The conductor informed him that he had about as much hope as a blind pig had of rooting against an acorn.

This information brought forth another wail from Rawbone, who indignantly informed the conductor of his intention of filing a claim with the company for the loss.

The genial gentleman made him no reply, but one could readily determine by the look on his face that he was on the eve of telling Mr. Rawbone Ferguson what he thought of his monumental assurance.

Shortly after, we came to a meeting point with a passenger train going in the opposite direction. The advance announcement that the mighty John L. was on our train, brought every head out of the windows of the train on the siding. Rawbone glanced out, and carelessly remarked that he would get off and stretch his legs. His countenance told me he was turning over some deep scheme in his mind; I watched him closely, fearing that he would try to put over something that might put us "inside looking out."

Shortly the other train began to move slowly out of the siding on to the main line. Waiting until it got up a speed where it was impossible for any of its passengers to jump off with safety, he nonchalantly reached out and lifted the lids from off the heads of two passengers who were craning their necks out the car window trying to get a last look at the champion of champions.

Greatly elated, he hastily climbed aboard our train, stuck one on his head and jammed the other on mine. The one I got was a trifle large for my head, so Rawbone obligingly abstracted a couple of lamp wicks from the ample supply of the flagman, which made the hat fit my head like the paper on the wall.

Properly crowned, and once more a gentleman as to sartorial habiliment, Ferguson began to bustle about to find a backer to stake him in one of the dozen or more poker games going on in our train. For a long time he was unsuccessful. Finally, as he was about to give up hope, he induced a banker with some proclivity for poker playing into watching him demonstrate the three-card monte game. Assuming that a man possessing such rare dexterity as Rawbone exhibited would be successful at

poker, he generously gave him the money for the purchase of a stack of whites. As the games were all open he had no difficulty in sitting in.

The play proceeded without any success on the part of Ferguson, much to the disgust of his backer, who sat immediately behind him. He got very few hands worth staying on; when he did get one, he got no play from his opponents. At the end of an hour his slender stack had shrunk to ten white chips. On skinning down his next five cards, he was overjoyed to find he held four aces cold. Rawbone, sitting in the golden position next the dealer opened the pot. On the call for cards, all the other players except the dealer, who held four kings cold, threw their hands into the discard.

"How many?" inquired the dealer looking into the face of Rawbone, whose countenance was as devoid of expression as an Egyptian mummy. Seemingly Ferguson was in a quandary about how to discard; finally, after making several bluffs toward throwing away three cards, in a tone of dejection he called for one. As the card was being dealt to him a breeze from the open window turned it face upward. Under the rule, the card, a queen of hearts, should go into the discard.

"I'm satisfied to take her if you have no objection," coolly remarked Rawbone.

"No objection," promptly returned his antagonist, who was visibly pleased. Ferguson's willingness to accept the card led his adversary to believe that it would fill a straight or heart flush—queen high; at the most Ferguson could hold only a full house or four queens, against his four kings. With four queens in Ferguson's hand, he would get a good play from him.

"Your bet," prompted the dealer, as he dextrously shuffled the stacks of chips in front of him. Rawbone dejectedly tossed in two chips, which his opponent promptly "saw" and raised back to the limit. Rawbone came back with a raise of five, which wiped out his stack; again the dealer saw and raised. Ferguson had his back to the wall; he could go no further. Here was a perfectly good hand, his very first, going to the dogs through lack of capital. But Rawbone was nothing if not resourceful.

"Do you think my hand is worth another raise?" he said, as he handed it to his backer for inspection. The banker carefully looked it over.

"Well, hardly, but you might whoop it once

more," he replied as he handed the cards back to Rawbone, at the same time pressing into Ferguson's pendent hand a roll of yellow-backed bills, big enough to choke a threshing machine.

For the next few minutes thereafter the action was rapid. Raises and counter-raises came thick and fast. Ferguson's face gave not the least inkling of the strength of his hand. He was taking the thousand to one chance on his opponent having made a straight or royal flush by his one-card draw. The players from the other tables laid down their cards and crowded excitedly around the two adversaries.

Presently there came a lull in the betting during which interval Ferguson studied the faces of the men around him. Would they give him a square deal, or would they assume he had come by the hand dishonestly and act accordingly? To say the least, the situation was critical.

The dealer began to have a feeling that perhaps, after all, Rawbone had him beaten. Plainly the best method was to raise his man out of the pot by making one big bet. Taking off his watch, ring and stickpin, as he was out of cash, he shoved them into the pot, placing a value on them of five hun-

dred dollars. Rawbone calmly and coolly peeled five one-hundred-dollar bills off his roll, and nonchalantly pushed them to the center of the table along with a hundred-dollar raise. The dealer was frantic—at the end of his finances. Slowly taking his gold match safe, set in diamonds, from his pocket, he tossed it into the pot.

"I call," he said, accompanying the words with a long drawn sigh.

Rawbone was as cool as the proverbial cucumber. Laying his five cards face down on the table, he audibly counted them—one, two, three, four—five; in order to prove his hand contained the requisite number of cards. I was on pins and needles. I had not seen the hand. Was Ferguson bluffing? Slowly and placidly he turned the inverted cards face up one by one until four aces were exposed to the astonished gaze of his opponent; finally with a sweeping flourish of his long lanky arm he turned up the queen of hearts for his fifth card.

"Will you please tell me," inquired the disgruntled loser, "what in hell you wanted with that queen of hearts?"

"Well," laconically replied Ferguson, as he

finished poking the pot into his pockets, "I always *did* like the ladies—especially if they happened to be queens."

Arriving in New Orleans, I suggested that we look up a cheap hotel that I knew of in the French Market.

"French Market, nothing," yelled Rawbone. "Here you"—calling to an ancient-looking negro, who was driving a bony horse hitched to a dilapidated victoria—"drive us the longest way round through the busiest streets to the St. Charles Hotel; if any one asks you who we are tell 'em the Duke of Duluth and his royal retinue, traveling incognito."

Two short hours previously the state of our finances had been such that if glue factories were selling for a nickel each, we couldn't have bought the faintest odor.

The outcome of the Ryan-Sullivan fight, when Sullivan won the championship, is a matter of history. If Ryan had not suffered a mishap, I doubt very much that Sullivan would have won. Ryan had the best of the fight up to the eighth round when his truss, which he wore for rupture, broke and he was helpless.

Boxing in those days was not legalized, and there were hours of sleuthing, shadowing and double-crossing before the fight was pulled off on the turf. A knock-down ended the round, with a minute's rest between. The principals sat on their second's knees between rounds. As an example of gameness, I saw Ryan, after being hit, hold blood in his mouth and swallow it rather than have "first blood" claimed and allowed against him.

The next I saw of John L. was in his fight with Jake Kilrain at Richburg, Mississippi, in 1889. Sullivan won on points in seventy-five rounds. How Kilrain lasted that long is a mystery to me. After the twenty-fifth round his left breast resembled a piece of raw beefsteak from the continued pounding of "Sully's" right hand, which fell like a sledge-hammer. I was up a tree about fifty yards distant and the sound of those blows resembled nothing so much as that produced by pounding on a big bass drum.

I saw the Sullivan-Mitchell fight at Chantilly, France, but as this was nothing more than a sprinting match on the part of Mitchell, I pass over it with a mere mention. Mitchell, or rather Pony Moore, his manager and trainer, insisted on a

Phineas Taylor Barnum. The one and only "P. T." As boy and man, the author was associated with him for twenty-five consecutive seasons.

Pete Conklin. Clown, jester and savant, known and loved as "the Shakespearian Clown." He lived happily until eighty-two years of age. "The professional fool must indeed be a wise man."

twenty-four foot ring, in place of the regulation ring of sixteen feet, and this gave Charley a chance to show his sprinting ability, in which he was an expert.

I looked every minute to see the referee disqualify "Sully" on a technicality; every time he got Mitchell into a clinch he tried to hold his left and soak him below the belt with his right.

When the end came John L. was so incensed at Mitchell's running tactics that he threw a lemon, which he had been sucking between rounds, at Mitchell's head; it caught him fairly between the eyes and splattered all over his face.

In August, 1892, I saw the "big fellow" in training on the sand at Coney Island for his fight with Jim Corbett, which was to come off at the New Orleans Athletic Club in September of that year. It was deemed advisable for Sullivan to take runs in deep sand, to improve his wind, as he was already beginning to show poorly in this respect. He came steaming into his quarters, with perspiration rolling from him in streams. Seeing me, he called out, "Bob, this is terrible. This is going to be my last fight, and I'd give the entire purse right now for a cold bottle of Mumm's." His words were prophetic—it *was* his last fight.

Two or three days before the fight I went over to see Corbett put the finishing touches to his training. He stood with his back to the wall and each of his trainers tried to land lightly on his jaw—not one succeeded.

Corbett, artful dodger that he was, avoided them all by side-stepping and ducking. I said to myself, "If this bird can do that in the fight and has any punch back of him, a new champion will be crowned."

The Sullivan-Corbett fight is now history. Corbett in almost every round cut Sullivan in ribbons, avoiding the champion's bull-like rushes with a dexterity that would have done credit to a dancing master.

I went into Sullivan's room after the fight and found him in tears—crying like a baby. He couldn't understand how it happened but sobbed out, "Well, Bob, the pitcher went to the well once too often."

So passed one of the greatest, if not *the* greatest, of heavyweight champions. He made a million and spent two. I have visited his last resting place several times and each time I call to mind the fitting quotation:

"We stop to curse the gods that hold us back,

and say, So great shalt thou be and yet infinitely small."

No boy in his teens ever became so much excited over the advent of the circus as Jim Fisk; and none looked forward to the opening day in New York as did he. When the big tents were spread on the lot at One Hundred and Tenth Street and Seventh Avenue Fisk with his party regularly rode up to the grounds in dashing style, the observed of all observers. No golden chariot in the parade attracted as much attention as his tallyho coach, drawn by four carefully groomed gray horses.

With Josie Mansfield, dashing Josie Mansfield, on the box beside him, the start was made from the Broadway Central Hotel after an early luncheon. The route led up Broadway to Central Park, then through the Park to the lot. Cheering crowds congregated along every foot of the way, and the party was kept busy acknowledging salutes from the people, for Jim Fisk was an idol in his day.

Arriving at the lot, no purchasing of tickets for him. He never did common things. The wall of the tent would be lifted and the coach with its occupants would drive in under the circus top, take a position near the ring bank and remain there during the entire performance.

On several occasions, he followed the grand entrée around the outside of the ring.

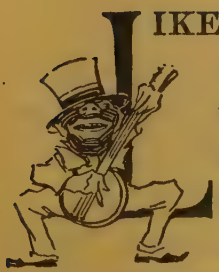
Not a performer came off after his act without saluting the party, and his salute was always graciously acknowledged. The horses were usually unhitched before the performance began. On one occasion they were left attached to the coach and became frightened and unmanageable when the elephant act came on. Before they could be controlled the leaders jumped into the lower strings of slats, one of their iron-shod hoofs cutting a long gash in the scalp of a young boy,—painful, but not dangerous. Josie Mansfield leaped lightly from the box, staunched the flow of blood and held the little fellow's head in her lap until he recovered sufficiently to be removed.

As the boy was being led away, Fisk drew his father to one side, and pressing a thousand-dollar bill into his hand, said: "Take this; if it is not enough, draw on me for more. When he gets well, bring him down to see me."

This boy, grown to manhood, with Jim Fisk's aid is now one of the biggest brokers in Wall Street.

CHAPTER XI

JOINING OUT



LIKE many other improvident circus men of my day, I was forced during the winter or off season, to "join out" as the saying goes with a "hall show." The theater with circus men is known as a "hall show" to distinguish it from the "tent show."

My first engagement was with a stock company at St. Louis, Missouri, in 1880. Stock companies then differed greatly from those of to-day. Their repertoire was made up almost entirely of Shakespearian dramas, with *East Lynne, The Ticket of Leave Man, Under the Gaslight, Uncle Tom's Cabin,* and a few other recognized thrillers thrown in by way of variety. They differed also in that the stars or leading men played around a circuit of four

or five cities while the supporting companies remained stationary.

Those were the good old days when beginners were kidded into going out to get the key of the curtain, or to buy a box of laughs or wrinkles.

Our wardrobe was meager, consisting mainly of a ballet shirt, a pair of knee breeches, a square cut coat, a few wigs, and always a Roman toga for *Damon and Pythias,* and a pair of petticoat trousers for *Enoch Arden.*

We played in but a few modern dramas, and dress suits were a novelty; there were not over two in the company, and these went the rounds. Fat or lean, the actors made them fit.

To mention the names of actors and actresses who started their careers in those stock companies would be equivalent to listing the majority of the greatest stars of the American stage: Walker Whiteside, Thomas W. Keene (the greatest Richard III of all time), John Griffith, Louis Morrison, Joseph Haworth and many others who subsequently arose to Thespian heights, were all graduates from this school. Of the women there were Annie Levering, the wife of Jim McVickers, who built the first up-to-date theater in Chicago; Ullie

Akerstrom, Olive Grove and Lizzie Evans, Nellie McHenry, Lotta Crabtree and others who subsequently became famous. Kate Claxton of *Two Orphans* fame was once a member of these organizations, but before my time.

Shakespeare was the vogue, and almost every member of the company, and the audience too, for that matter, was "up" in the lines of every play written by the immortal bard.

Shakespeare is vastly different from any other playright—you must learn him letter perfect. That you can't fake him, or modernize the language, the following incident proves:

Hamlet was being cast. Every part was filled with the exception of the Second Player who has to render the following hard speech:

"Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, time and
place agreeing;
Confederate season, else no creature seeing;
Thou mixture rank of midnight weed collected,
With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,
Thy natural magic and dire property
On wholesome life usurp immediately."

The stage manager was at his wits' end for some one to play the part, and in desperation was about

to resort to the expediency of having the lines read "off stage," when along about two o'clock before the evening performance came a sterling old actor named Sam Drake. Sam boasted that he knew Shakespeare "both ways from the middle"—as a matter of fact, he did; but he was such a slave to drink that he was undependable and rarely ever had an engagement. As "any port in a storm" was acceptable, Sam was given the part without rehearsal. In the interim, he went out and indulged in his favorite vice and showed up so "loaded" that he had to hold his chin up to keep from spilling it. The stage manager was frantic; however, there was no other person for the part, and so Sam went on. He couldn't get started on the speech, so he attempted to fake it by roaring out

> "Nobody nigh,—nobody near;
> I'll pour the poison in his ear,
> And then by God I'll disappear."

As almost the entire audience was perfectly familiar with the real speech, it is not difficult to imagine the sensation the incident created. Sam *did* disappear the next morning, and I have never laid eyes on him since.

We opened our week on Sunday night. Joseph Jefferson was billed to appear one week at another theater, in *Rip Van Winkle*. As he never played on Sunday, he came round to see our performance of *Hamlet*.

I was cast for the gravedigger, a part played many times by him, and one in which he excelled. He came back stage after the show, paid me a nice compliment on my conception of the part and invited me to lunch with him the next day. Later I walked with him to a bank, where he desired to get a draft cashed—no easy task in those days without identification. The paying teller was very obliging, but cautious. He said: "I'm very sorry, Mr. Jefferson, but it is impossible to oblige you without identification."

Mr. Jefferson stroked his chin meditatively, then in that wonderful dialect peculiar to his characterization of Rip, said: "Vell, if mine dog Schneider vas here, he vould know me."

"That's all I need, Mr. Jefferson," said the teller. "Nobody but Joe Jefferson could render that speech like that. Here's the money."

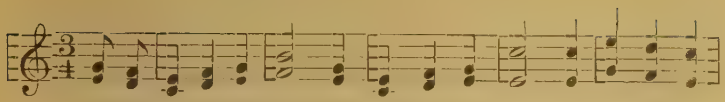
Shortly after the "Rip" incident our roster was augmented by the acquisition of that clever trag-

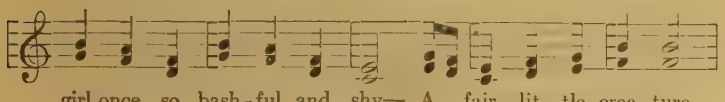
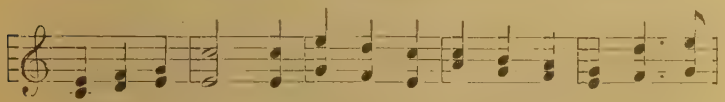
edian, Thomas W. Keene, who remained for a period of two seasons, playing to full houses. The critics of that day were unanimous in their praise. His rendition of Richard III was acclaimed as the best portrayal of the character ever presented in America. When one stops to consider that this part was played many times by such actors as Edwin Booth, the elder Salvini and others, the compliment was all the more pronounced.

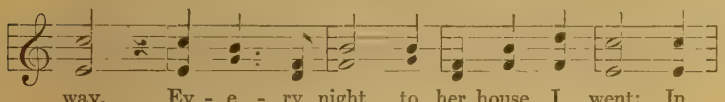
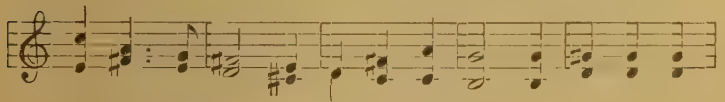
Keene unfortunately had the habit of "crooking his elbow" in barrooms, a custom decidedly prevalent among actors, and indeed some actresses of that period. Periodically he was so inebriated that his understudy was often forced to play his part.

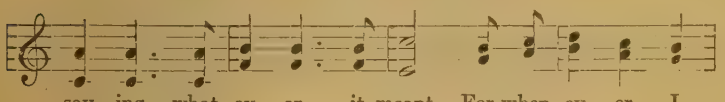
We had with us at this time a property man of diminutive size, possessed of a voice with about as much resonance as a piccolo. In size he was about as big as a pound of soap after a hard day's washing. He was often pressed into playing small parts, although he made no claim to being an actor. In a certain bill he was cast for a servant, with but one line to speak. Mr. Keene was directing the rehearsal. Entering at his cue, the property man proclaimed in a thin piping voice: "Me Lord, the dinner waits."

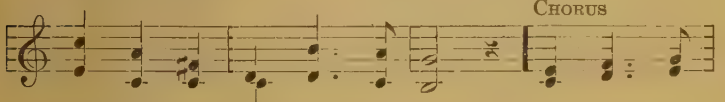
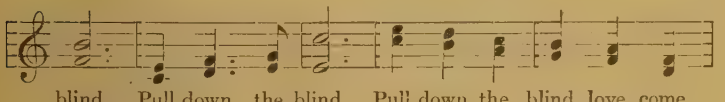
Pull Down The Blind

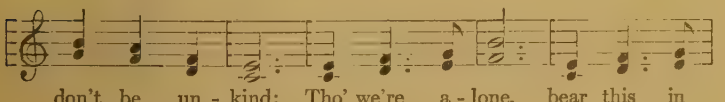








CHORUS





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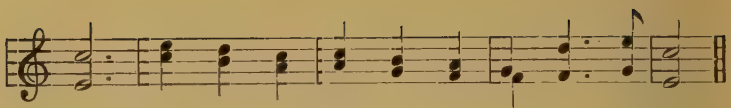

mind, Some-bod-y's look-ing, love, pull down the blind.

How loving we were! how cosy we'd chat
'Bout one thing and t'other, and this thing, and that;
With my arm round her waist, how cosy we sat,
Like two little turtle doves perch'd on a tree;
Such squeezing, and teasing, and pleasing we had,
Such wooing, and cooing, to make our hearts glad;
With laughing and chaffing I near drove her mad,
But still she was awfully spooney on me:

SPOKEN:—*And if that Soldier would only have left us alone, she would never have exclaimed:*—CHORUS.

One night, for a change, we went to the Play,
And when we got home she was awfully gay,
She saw them make love, and so learn'd the way,
The piece was "Claude Melnotte," and suited her fine;
She call'd me her rose-bud, her duck, and her dear,
She threw her arms round me, while fast fell each tear;
She cried, oh, don't leave me, for sadly I fear
You don't love me truly, say, will you be mine?

SPOKEN:—*Just at that moment a Policeman passed and she said:*—CHORUS.

Mr. Keene, who was possessed of a very sonorous voice roared at him: "Is that the way you're going to speak that line to-night? Speak it like this." Whereupon he roared it out in his best Macbethian voice.

"Well, Mr. Keene," replied the little fellow, "if I could speak it in a tone of voice like that, I wouldn't be playing small parts around here for six dollars a week."

"Is that all you get?" inquired Keene.

"Yes, sir," said he.

"Then speak it as you damn please," returned Keene.

Our juvenile man was Joseph Haworth, who afterward became well known through the production of *Paul Kauvar,* the first American play with a mob scene. Haworth was a splendid young actor, but conceited and egotistical in a superlative degree.

When playing leads, he unfailingly examined the house bills and programs to see how he was featured. If his name was not in black face capitals, he invariably set up a howl. On one occasion he was cast as Virginius in Sheridan Knowle's play of the same name. Much elated over the honor, he

induced the manager, Colonel Pope, to permit him to dictate the wording on the house billboards. After much labor and erasing he evolved the following:

You may have seen Booth,
You may have seen McCullough,
You may have seen Barrett,
BUT YOU HAVE NOT SEEN HAWORTH.

A very fetching announcement had not some wag written underneath it:

"I never made but one actor, his name is Haworth. G—d Almighty."

There have been many actors possessed of excellent talent who failed of metropolitan engagements because they desired to be managers. They preferred to play through the "sticks," eking out a precarious existence, if only they could be boss. They stranded on an average of four times a season.

My lot was once cast with one of this sort, a Jewish actor by the name of Jakey Jacobson. Jakey was the best Fagin in *Oliver Twist* that I ever knew. It came natural to him. His company was generally made up of himself, his wife and

three children, and a miscellaneous collection of chambermaids and waitresses recruited from various hotels in towns where he had made weekly stands. Frequently a hotel clerk, who had gone along hoping to collect a back board bill, would become impregnated with a wild desire to act and join out for a *limited* engagement.

I was advised by friends not to accept the engagement. I was told and *retold* that the man never paid a cent of salary if he could avoid it. Everything I was told was gospel truth. He not only failed to pay salaries, but refused to give you postage stamps, for fear you would use them to write for another engagement. He was the most frugal manager that I ever worked for. There was only one thing in which he was generous—that was in publicity for the Jacobson family. Often the names of the entire family would be starred on the program. The fact that several of them had no speaking parts was of no consequence.

Hotel keepers were a shining target for Jakey's cupidity. He never paid one of them when he could avoid it. On the morning the company was due to leave town after a week's stay in repertoire, Jakey would call the landlord aside and open a

conversation somewhat like the following: "Lantlord, I make me no money in this town. Business vas awful, lantlord"—here real tears would begin to run down his cheeks, and sobs would shake his body—"I can't pay you, lantlord. I don't know vat I should do. See, lantlord, here is the locket of my leetle dead baby, mit his picture in it. Look, lantlord, at the dent in the locket made by his leetle tooths. Please, lantlord,"—big sobs and a deluge of tears—"say you'll keep it until I send you the money. It would kill my wife if she knew I vas doing this." Usually he put it over and left the "lantlord" holding the locket for security.

I discovered that he paid three dollars a dozen for those lockets in Chicago and took a hammer and nail to make the "print of his leedle dead baby's tooths."

There was at least one occasion when Jacobson did not get away with it. The landlord listened patiently up to the point where he, also, began to shed tears in sympathy and was about to accept "mine leedle dead baby's locket, mit the dent made by his leedle tooths," when it suddenly dawned on him that he was being entertained by a fine bit of acting. Being a small and rather delicate man, he

called to a burly hotel porter and sobbed: "Throw this man out, he's breaking my heart."

Jacobson's star publicity stunt was the giving away each week of a set of parlor furniture. Promptly every Monday, the opening day of the week's engagement, the furniture was placed on view in the window of a prominent local merchant, and each evening when making his curtain speech Jakey would call particular attention to the "generosity" of the management in presenting, "absolutely gratis, this beautiful suite of furniture, fit to adorn the palace of a king"; at the same time admonishing and advising his hearers to retain their numbered coupons in order to be sure of having a chance in the grand drawing on the coming Saturday evening, the last performance of the engagement of his celebrated company. "Every person holding a numbered coupon which has been given out during the week will have an *equal chance* to draw the furniture," Jakey would emphasize.

At the close of the bill on Saturday night, the curtain would be rung up, and Jakey would appear, all smiles, and proceed to "give away" the grand prize.

"Now, could we get some little boy or girl to come forward and draw the numbers out of this hat? Any little boy or girl. Come right along, little girl, nobody is going to hurt you—give me your hand, step right over the footlights—that's it—now, there you are! Now, let me tie this nice handkerchief over your eyes, so no one can say you saw the number before you drew it. There we are! Now, ladies and gentlemen, the tenth number drawn is the lucky one calling for the grand prize to be given 'free gratis' by the celebrated Jacobson Dramatic Company, famous from coast to coast."

I'll say right here, they *were* famous. If the names of all the hotels from coast to coast who held Jakey's I. O. U.'s were tabulated they would have filled the Hotel Red Book.

"Now, little lady, put in your hand and draw a number. T-h-a-t-'s i-t."

So, the drawing would proceed until nine numbers had been drawn, passed to Jacobson and *destroyed* by him immediately. Much excitement in the audience. Hope rose high. Every one had a chance. Striking as statuesque a pose as his embonpoint and bowed legs would permit, he would dramatically cry out: "Shall we draw the tenth

and lucky number?" The affirmative answer would come like a peal of thunder reverberating through the auditorium.

The tenth number would be duly drawn. The audience would wait with bated breath. This time the number would be passed to the committee for examination. A slight delay would ensue while the number was passed to each member for verification. Every heart would stand still.

"Number 450," would call the chairman in clarion tones.

"Here it is," a voice would cry, and a man, seemingly very excited, would stand on a seat in the rear and frantically wave a coupon above his head.

"Will you please come forward, sir?" the urbane master of ceremonies would ask. After comparing the number on the coupon with the lucky number, Jakey would congratulate him with a hearty handshake.

"Would you mind giving us your name and address?"

"Certainly. My name is George Wright, and I live in ——ville,"—mentioning a town some fifty miles distant. "I was passing through the city and

just happened to drop into the theater. Wasn't I lucky?"

"George Wright" was a duly constituted member of the celebrated Jacobson Dramatic Company, in character make-up for the occasion to avoid recognition. It was very easy for him to hold ticket number 450, *as every ticket in the hat was numbered 450.*

This is the only known method of giving away a set of furniture each week, without the owner losing his right, title and interest.

While a member of Bidwell's St. Charles Street Stock Company, in New Orleans, in the early 'eighties, I, along with several others of the company, was tipped off to the fact that a colored amateur dramatic society would give a performance of *Othello* the following week. As each of us aspired to play the part at some time in our career, we decided to attend, in the hope that we might see a new conception of the character.

The place of presentation was on the third floor of a tumble-down frame building located in the black belt just off the old French market, at that time the most picturesque spot in the entire South. After a rough hour and a half ride on a mule car,

we arrived. The "profession" was recognized, and we were given seats in the center of the hall.

Word was passed from lip to lip that "big actohs from the white folks' theater" were in the audience, and everybody seemed much excited about it. Apparently the hall was used as a meeting place for what Octavus Roy Cohen would call "The Sons and Daughters of I Will Arise." The news of our presence filtered to back stage and almost a panic resulted among the dusky Thespians, who could not withstand the temptation to take a peek from the proscenium entrance. Eventually, Othello himself, resplendent in Moorish make-up came from back stage, walked down the aisle to where we sat and introduced himself. This incident drew a chorus of Oh's and Ah's from the dusky female contingent in the audience.

In due time the orchestra finished his labors in rendering the "overtuah," and mopped his perspiring brow. An unseen hand jingled a fair sized dinner bell, and the gorgeous red curtain was swept aside by a small negro so black that charcoal would have made a white mark on him. So elated was he at the honor bestowed on him, that he stopped for several seconds in the center of the

stage and presented a "wide open countenance" to admiring friends in the audience. From this point, things moved rapidly, though roughly, toward the climax of the tragedy.

The play was presented in the choicest Senegambian dialect, with a New Orleans accent. Othello made his address to the Duke (although I feel positive the most learned Shakespearian scholar never would have recognized it), Iago duly planted the green-eyed monster in the breast of Othello, and the performance proceeded to the scene wherein Othello demands of Desdemona the 'kerchief which he gave her.

Transfixing her with a piercing glance, he said, "Des'mona, gimme dat hankchef?"

No reply from the lady.

"Foh de secon' time, I says, Des'mona! You gwine gimme dat hank*chef?*"

Still no reply.

"Foh de thud and last time, I says, Wench! gimme dat hank*chef?*"

Just then an old colored man in the audience evidently not up in the dialogue rose from his seat. Pointing a derisive finger at Othello, he yelled: "Oh, foh Gawd's sake, niggah, wipe yo' nose on yo' coat sleeve and let the show go on."

An actor's life on the New England College circuit in the early 'eighties was no sinecure. If he deviated from his lines one jot or tittle he was instantly made aware of it by his audience, composed mainly of students. If, for example, the play presented happened to be one of Shakespeare's, or possibly Schiller's *Mary Queen of Scots,* there would be present row upon row of students, comparing original text with the lines spoken by the actors.

This custom was very annoying to Mr. Thomas W. Keene, whom I supported many seasons.

Those familiar with the heavy dramas played then were aware of the fact that almost every star arranged his own version of the piece to fit his particular characterization, much the same as a musical artist arranges the selections which he plays.

So annoying had the buzzing and subdued conversation become on one occasion, that Mr. Keene, who was interpreting the name part in *Macbeth,* was close to the exploding point. Without taking any one into his confidence, he decided to end it for all time. Striding out in one of the important front scenes, he struck a majestic pose and, looking belligerently at his audience, he roared out:

"Duncan is in his grave. After life's fitful fever he sleeps well. And that's where I leave him and you. If you are sufficiently interested to learn of his further peregrinations, you may do so from the copies of Shakespeare which you are holding in your laps."

After this speech he majestically strutted off the stage, leaving the audience aghast. No amount of persuading on the part of the house manager could induce him to return, and his understudy had to finish the part. Needless to say, the righteous rebuke was sufficient to banish the books for the evening.

Theater audiences are peculiar. As a whole, they are comparatively easy to carry with you. Some spectators will be phlegmatic and unimpressionable, while others again will be so carried away by emotion as to believe the incidents in the drama realities.

An individual of the latter sort came every night to see a melodrama which we had on for a season's run in Chicago in 1889. The piece was just an ordinary one with a prize fight and a horse race thrown in for high lights. A woman, whose husband devotes so much time to his business that

he neglects his young and pretty wife, picks up acquaintance with a handsome but insidious lounge lizard, who becomes her lover. One of the big situations in the play was a scene where the lover makes his escape by the narrowest margin from a back window, just as the injured husband walks in unannounced at the front door.

As press agents and managers were always keen on the scent for anything that would bring the play to notice, this nightly patron was asked if there was anything of exceptional interest to him in the production.

"Well, yes, there is," he said. "You know that scene where the feller escapes just as her man comes in the front door. Well, some night that gent is going to be a leetle late in gittin' out, and I'm goin' to be here to see the fun."

Following engagements with road shows, I appeared in the New York productions of Denier's *Humpty Dumpty;* William Gillette's *Held by the Enemy;* Denman Thompson's *Old Homestead;* Barrows and Staley's *She, Secret Service,* and many others. Regularly each spring when the bluebirds began to sing, back I went to the circus.

Present-day stars of the stage miss many of the

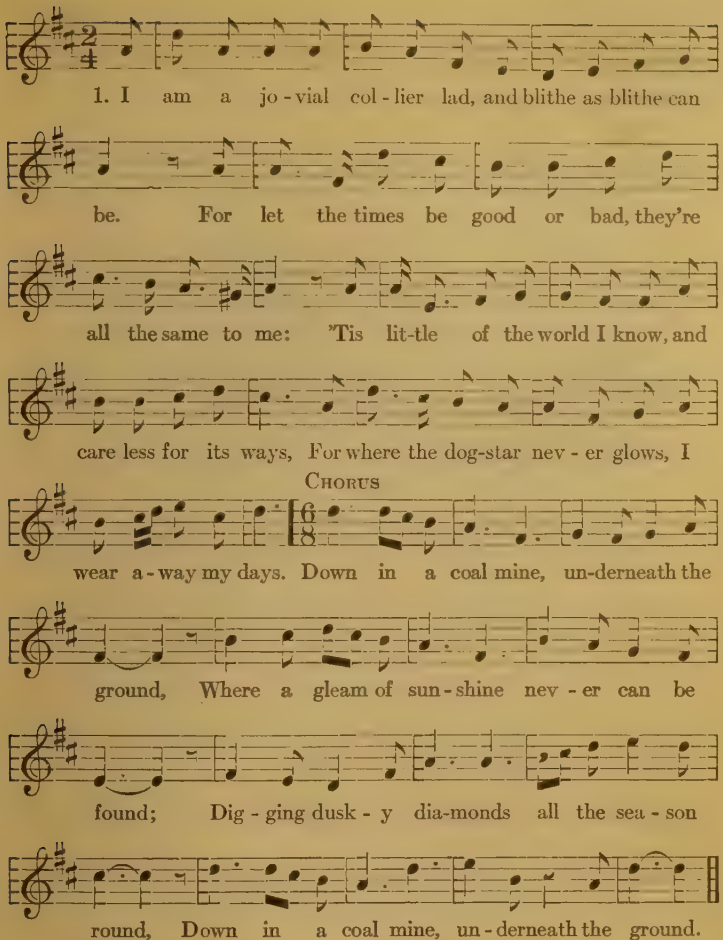
thrills of the old repertoire actor. Being a "type" and having the lines and business pounded in by a director, as is done to-day, does not make for versatility. The practise is a living rebuttal to Shakespeare's line: "Each man in his time plays many parts."

The repertoire road companies were obliged to carry a small roster, in order to keep expenses within the limit. All members of the company, except perhaps the leads, doubled in many parts. Companies with which I appeared often produced *Uncle Tom's Cabin* with only six people in the cast. I have played every part in this notable play, except Little Eva and the cakes of ice on which Eliza crosses the river. Perhaps my very best characterization was that of the bloodhounds, whose barking I nightly imitated from off stage.

"Gutter sniping" was a term with which the old repertoire and minstrel troupers of the early 'eighties were quite familiar. No minstrel man was considered a thoroughbred unless he had, at some period in his career, done gutter sniping.

Reduced to a minstrel minimum, it meant playing music in the street and passing the hat for expense money. The practise was indulged in only

Down In A Coal Mine


1. I am a jo - vial col - lier lad, and blithe as blithe can
be. For let the times be good or bad, they're
all the same to me: 'Tis lit-tle of the world I know, and
care less for its ways, For where the dog-star nev - er glows, I
Chorus
wear a - way my days. Down in a coal mine, un-derneath the
ground, Where a gleam of sun - shine nev - er can be
found; Dig - ging dusk - y dia-monds all the sea - son
round, Down in a coal mine, un - derneath the ground.

2 My hands are horny, hard and black, with working in the vein,
And, like the clothes upon my back, my speech is rough and plain;
Well, if I stumble with my tongue, I've one excuse to say,
'Tis not the collier's heart that's wrong, 'tis th' head that goes astray.

3 At ev'ry shift, be't soon or late, I haste my bread to earn,
And anxiously my kindred wait and watch for my return;
For Death, that levels all alike, whate'er their rank may be,
Amid the fire and damp may strike, and fling his darts at me.

4 How little do the great ones care, who sit at home secure,
What hidden dangers colliers dare, what hardships they endure;
The very fires their mansions boast, to cheer themselves and wives,
Mayhap were kindled at the cost of jovial colliers' lives.

5 Then cheer up, lads, and make ye much of ev'ry joy ye can,
But let your mirth be always such as best becomes a man;
However Fortune turns about, we'll still be jovial souls,
What would our country be without the lads that look for coals?

in dire necessity, and never successfully if the manager was in evidence.

Just once, and once was sufficient, was I forced to do "gutter sniping." Bruce's Modern Minstrels, with whom I was playing ends on a lean season, made a balloon ascension in a town in Michigan. Business had been bad for ten weeks and salaries had not been paid for a like period. Lent and spring were near at hand, which foreshadowed a worse state of affairs to come.

The manager, after settling the house with the owner, paid the company's hotel bill for bed and breakfast and skipped on the midnight train, leaving behind him a mournful lot of black-face troupers, whose finances amounted to just twenty-seven cents. About the only tangible assets left by him were the band instruments. We could not pledge these, for how could a minstrel man fill an engagement without doubling in brass?

After a meeting held in the hotel office, to devise ways and means of carrying the caravan out of town, the entire gang marched in solemn procession to the railway station, a mile distant.

There were many suggestions as to the next step to be taken, but finally, after a great deal of

discussion, during which many expedients, pro and con, were argued, we decided to ship our instruments by express collect, and each one strike for Chicago by freight train, known to actors as riding the "side door Pullmans."

While waiting for a freight train, we foregathered on some piles of railroad ties about one hundred yards up the siding. One of the boys was given fifteen cents from the bank roll and sent to the nearest news stand for a copy of the *New York Clipper,* at that time a publication consulted by all circus and theatrical people looking for engagements.

As we waited for him to return, we pulled out our pipes, only to find there was not a crumb of smoking tobacco in the entire company. We were struck with a great idea—the bark on the ties. In less than five minutes, every pipe, filled with elm bark "tobacco," was in full blast. It was a little bitter, but yet very enjoyable in our distress. We must have made a ludicrous picture: twelve men sprawled over a big pile of ties smoking that makeshift tobacco.

We were startled from our reveries by a wild yell coming from up the street. Whooping like an

Indian and waving a paper over his head, the man who had been sent after the *Clipper* burst into our midst and excitedly pointed to an advertisement in the section devoted to circus news:

> "Wanted for season's engagement in Chicago, band of ten mouthpieces and two drums. Write or wire salary expected to Pat Harris's Nickle Plate Circus, Chicago, Ill."

"Salary expected" was a huge joke. Any salary, in our present position, would have been acceptable. Expenses alone would have been welcome.

But—and there is generally a "but" in predicaments such as ours—where was the money to come from for the telegram to Chicago? After deducting the cost of the paper, seventeen cents remained, and the price of a telegram to the Windy City was forty cents. The charge might as well have been forty dollars—we could have paid it just as easily. Seemingly we were up against a stone wall, and our hopes fell with a thud. In the midst of our despair, one of the boys recalled that he had learned telegraphy when a boy. Into the station he went and induced the operator to allow him to send the following deadhead message:

"Minstrel band want to quit road. Can join at once, subject to approval. Here for two days. Wire tickets for twelve men."

Then began an anxious period of waiting. Noon came—no answer to the message; five and six o'clock, and still no reply. We had had nothing to eat since breakfast and things began to look desperate. Something must be done and quickly.

The station agent ended our dilemma by suggesting that we give a free concert in front of the hotel. He did more than that,—he induced His Honor the Mayor to make a stirring appeal in our favor, which he did standing on an empty packing case, closing his speech by contributing five dollars to the gutter-sniping fund.

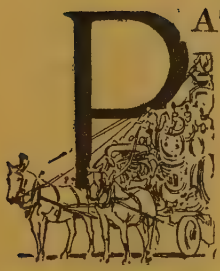
Early the next morning the landlord rapped on my door and delivered a telegram reading:

"Call on agent for twelve tickets to Chicago. Money for same deposited with agent here."

Our second trip to the station was made with banners flying. By this time the news of our stranding had spread through the entire town, and as we marched down street to a lively air, a crowd of men and boys cheered us every foot of the way.

CHAPTER XII

AT LARGE



PATRONS of the circus of forty years ago may recall the gentlemanly photographer who offered to "take your picture absolutely free of charge." After carefully placing a young couple in full view of the early arrivals he requested that they look up at the top of the tent, and "please not to move until I snap the picture." When he got them posed the bogus photographer silently folded his camera and sneaked away to leave the young couple staring at the peak of the canvas, much to the merriment of the audience.

I originated that joke from seeing the young country boys and their sweethearts posing for their tin-types in the galleries, which usually pitched their tents just outside the lot. People will laugh

more heartily and quickly at the embarrassment of others than at anything else. The more natural the joke, the better it gets over.

While standing one day in front of the giraffe pens my attention was directed to two young boys who were evidently looking at a giraffe for the first time. For about two minutes neither spoke a word, so interested were they. Finally one of them, a little red-haired, freckled-faced rascal, said to his pal, "Say, Chimmie, wouldn't yer like ter have a neck as long as that? Couldn't yer taste yer ice-cream a long time?"

"No, I wouldn't," answered his pal. "Lookit. Sposin' you'd ketch the sore throat, see how long the medicine would taste."

Revamped for use between the ringmaster and myself, that joke went big—even in England, where they are generally allowed two days to see the point of a Yankee quip. Pantomime in England is usually understood, but woe to the clown who tells a subtle one to an Englishman on Saturday—he is sure to disturb the Sunday congregation by laughing.

While we were showing in the Olympic Gar-

dens in London, there was an American comedy, which abounded in Yankee vernacular, running at the Drury Lane Theater. The production was a riot in the United States; but on the other side, the humorous slang dialogue did not get a wrinkle—they simply could not get the American view-point.

Finally in the hope of relieving the situation, the stage manager had printed on the program the slang phrases with definitions in English vernacular. The dictionary failed in its purpose; by the time the definition was read and understood, the laugh came in the wrong spot.

Those of us who roll rapidly over the smooth roads which have been built for the automobiles in the last decade, can have no conception of the hardships of overland travel which beset the old wagon show of forty years ago. True, there was generally only one *road* between towns. Sometimes it happened to be a turnpike, where we were at least secure from miring down; more often it was a clay dirt road, poor enough in dry weather, and almost impassable after a heavy rain.

We had many delays on the latter. The light wagons usually got through on time, but the heavy

cage and canvas wagons often did not get to the lot until nearly noon.

When these unavoidable delays occurred, the men were out of humor, and everything seemed to go wrong during the day. We were sometimes put to the necessity of begging breakfast for the men from some farmer along the route, who promised everything when paid in advance and served a meager meal afterward.

The show was crawling along one bright summer morning between two towns in southern Missouri. A terrific storm during the night had so delayed us that at breakfast time we were still ten miles or more from our next stop.

Every one in the party was madder than a wet hen. With a desire to pacify the troupe, a rider was sent ahead to try to secure breakfast at some farm-house. He returned in a few minutes with the welcome news that a farmer about a mile ahead would accommodate us. I was slightly delayed in getting up to the house, and the men had all gone in to eat. Spying our host in the barnyard, I asked him to show me the way to the dining-room.

Rolling his big quid of tobacco to the other

cheek he said, "Sure, I will. Come right along. I always show the hogs the way to the trough the first time; then they know the way afterward."

Breakfast over, I stood talking to him in the barnyard while our horses were being brought out. In the center of the stable lot was a big pile of newly threshed straw, in which stood a large white cow belly deep. Every now and then his boy would chase her away. When the boy's back was turned, the cow persistently came back, only to be chased away again.

I remarked to him that I thought he should allow her to eat as much as she liked as it was cheap food. He looked at me and grinned broadly.

"Stranger," he said, "you don't know that old white cow. She's peculiar. If she knew that she was allowed to eat as much as she liked, she wouldn't eat a mouthful. But if she is made to think we don't want her to eat it, she'll have it, or bust a hame-string."

I was a very young man then, just out of my teens, but I never have forgotten the story of the old white cow. How like the human family she was. How natural it is for all of us to reach out for something that is denied us. If it is wealth,

then seemingly money is one thing that will make us supremely happy.

Once get the public to believe a play is so successful that tickets can not be had, and they will pay any price, while a superior production will go begging. Figuratively, the old white cow is employed by almost all venders of amusement.

Take for example, the Dempsey-Firpo fight. Firpo, as the result proved, was no match for the champion, and but little interest was taken in the bout, until it was reported that tickets for the event were scarce—in fact, were not to be had. Up went the demand, and the price, and the speculators reaped a fortune. And at that there were many vacant seats when the bout began.

The "old white cow" again.

On the night of the fight referred to, a friend of mine, a stock broker, and I were making our way around the outside of the Polo Grounds to one of the entrances. A cordon of police, placed about one hundred feet apart, were entirely surrounding the structure to prevent any gate crashing. About twenty boys were grouped on the outside of the police lines, evidently bent on climbing the steel pillars into the upper grandstand, provided they saw the chance. The policeman on

guard was the only problem they had to solve. I suddenly resolved that those boys should see that fight if I could help them. I whispered my plan to my friend, and we started into a wordy argument, which quickly culminated in our throwing off our coats and wading into each other, hammer and tongs. The officers on each side of us ran over to quell what they thought was a genuine fist fight, leaving the pillar nearest the boys unprotected.

The leader of the boys grasped the situation instantly, and up the pillar he started, followed by all the others. I was somewhat disturbed as to whether or not we would be able to keep up the deception until the boys could finish their climb. Every second I thought the officers would use their night sticks over our heads. But they didn't. Out of the corner of my eye I saw the last boy go over the rail and into the upper tier of seats. Then we stopped fighting, and told the officer we were only fooling. "Don't kid yourself," he answered. "Yez wasn't foolin' any one. Yez just give us an excuse to turn our backs, while thim byes climbed in. We've been tryin' to find somethin' for the last hour."

Perhaps it was not the proper thing for a re-

spectable seller of Bibles to engage in, but I had often, in my boyhood days, been in many a similar predicament. I could not resist the temptation.

About a week after the incident, I was sitting in my office, when a bright, freckled-face young boy, with a front tooth missing, was ushered in to see me. Replying to my inquiry as to what I could do for him, he said, "I came down to thank you for helping us get in to see the fight at the Polo Grounds last week."

"Yes," I said, "but how did you know it was I? And how did you know where to find me?"

"Well, you see," he replied, "I just happened to see you go by in your car after the fight; so I took the number on your license plate and got the name and address from the Secretary of State."

And yet they say the New York Police Department is hard up for material from which to make competent detectives.

As enchantment to the negro, the circus excelled the drawing power of the Pied Piper of Hamlin. When the show arrived in town, they went to it like a sick kitten to a hot rock. By hook or crook they managed in some manner to attend.

One morning about daybreak in the early spring of 1881, we were almost two miles from a southern town where we were to show on that day. The wagon on which I rode having halted to make a slight repair, I slipped down to wash my face in a small brook, which was running along the side of the road. Across the fence in a field was a negro plowing cotton. For the time being, he was standing between the plow handles, gazing in open-mouthed wonder at the string of circus wagons going along the road. As it was such an unusual thing to see a colored man at home working on circus day, I inquired of him the reason.

"Well, Kunnel," he drawled, "you all see what *I'm* doin', don't yo'?"

"Yes," I replied. "You are raising cotton."

"Thass it, Kunnel, thass it," he said. "I'se raisin' cotton, an' you all cain't raise hell and cotton at de same time."

Notwithstanding all his good resolutions I spied him sitting on an empty packing case along the line of the parade. I recognized him by the bright bandana 'kerchief around his neck. I called to him and inquired the reason why he had left his work.

"Well, Kunnel," said he, "shortly aftah you all went by, my mule wuz tuk wif a misery in his stummick, an' I jus' plumb had to cum to town to get some medicin' for him."

Later I saw him carrying water to the seal wagon, in happy forgetfulness of the mule "tuk wif a misery in his stummick."

For several seasons we had with us a tall, gaunt, hungry-looking negro who served as a caretaker of one of the lion cages. His gangling frame resembled nothing so much as a pair of animated quilting frames. His greatest ambition was to become a lion tamer, but he never could screw his courage to the sticking point. He was a great poser when people of his own color were around, and constantly endeavored to impress them with his importance and bravery. He was never so happy as when, dressed in a lurid red coat, he rode in the parade on top of an open den of lions. Frequently, when the parade halted, he would, in the hearing of the surrounding colored population, shout to the man in the cage, "How's dem lions of mine?" One day, while the parade was making a short halt, a colored bystander engaged him in conversation.

"Look heah, colored boy," said the native negro, "what does you all do wif dis show?"

"Who, me?" inquired the elongated one. "Why, I'se a lion tamah."

"What do you all mean by lion tamah? What do you all does wif dem lions?"

"W-e-l-l," said he, "I gits me in de cage wif 'em, stans 'em on dey hind legs and feeds 'em raw meat from mah hans. Den I opens dey moufs and sticks mah head in 'em. Thass all."

"Youah no lion tamah, boy," said the native negro. "Youah just a lyin' nigger, thass all."

Southern negroes were always great admirers of the John Robinson Show. Any person who claimed in their hearing that there were better shows than "Massa John Robinson's" would find an argument on his hands pronto.

For many years the Barnum advance cars carried a banner on which was emblazoned "Greatest Show on Earth." Attached to this banner was the date on which the show would appear. For example, "Greatest Show on Earth Here Sept. 1." A little negro boy, on reading the announcement inquired of his mammy the meaning of it. To which she replied, "Dat mean, sonny, Greatest

Show on Earth here 'cept *one,* and dat's Massa John Robinson's show, honey chile."

Admission tickets used by the circus of the 'eighties were made of ordinary card-board on which the name of the show and the words "admit one" were printed. After being deposited in the box at the door, they were counted and returned to the ticket wagon for resale. This custom opened the door for a great deal of swindling on the part of the ticket takers and sellers.

The latter had to account only for such tickets as reached the box. Any money in excess of the amount was his. I have seen as many as two hundred tickets surreptitiously returned to the ticket sellers that never reached the box. This meant that the show lost one hundred dollars a performance, the amount being equally divided among the men involved in the deal.

In order to break up this practise, it was the custom of Mr. Barnum, when with the show, to sit in the small triangle just outside the main entrance, where he could keep an eye on the entire situation. As the doors were open only one hour before the performance began, it did not require much of his time. After the audience was assembled and the

arrivals began to be few, it was his custom to collect a crowd of negroes about him and open a discussion on religion. As most negroes, especially the older ones, have very pronounced opinions on religion, P. T. often found himself bested in these verbal encounters.

On one such occasion, he opened a conversation with an old colored man on the topic of the Bible.

"See here, Uncle Mose," said P. T., "do you honestly believe everything the Good Book says?"

"Yas, sah," said the old darky, "I suttinly does believe ev'ything de Good Book say."

"Now, this story about the flood; do you believe it rained forty days and nights?"

"Oh, yes indeedy, massa, they suttinly was a big downpoh o' watah."

"And this fable of Cain killing Abel," persisted P. T., "do you place any faith in that yarn?"

"Yes, massa," said Uncle Mose, "Cain done struck Abel a pow'ful blow."

"Now," said Barnum quickly, "this story of Jonah swallowing the whale—you *certainly* don't believe that?"

"*'Sho'* do, Massa Barnum, ol' country folks wer' *great* fo' fish," replied Uncle Mose.

My home in Brooklyn is very near the Vitagraph Film Company and the owners are great friends of mine. When the company was in its infancy, they frequently appealed to me to play small parts in their productions. On one occasion I was induced to play the part of a lighthouse keeper who was made drunk by the villain, so that he might be knocked down on the seashore, and the keys of the lighthouse taken from him.

As most every one in the movie business knows, all pictures taken in close proximity to any body of water are liable to show a reflection of the sunlight in the face of the person photographed. To overcome this possibility, it is necessary to powder the entire face with a mixture of equal parts of prepared chalk and powdered sulphur, which gives one a sickly-looking yellow complexion.

While we were rehearsing the scene there was a motley crowd standing high up on a sand-bank on the shore, among them an old colored lady. Evidently she did not see the director, or the camera man, and got the erroneous impression that some roughnecks were maltreating an old man. She stood looking on in silence at the rehearsal for some time, until she could stand it no longer.

Raising her voice to a high pitch she severely excoriated the men spectators for idly standing by while an old man was cruelly beaten—seemingly for no reason at all. Shaking her fist at the perpetrators, she screamed out, "I jus' think it's plum' shameful, throwin' dat po' ol' man roun' in dat sand and him *got de yaller janders.*"

In the village where I was born, and learned the three R's in school, there lived a queer little old Scotchman by the name of Jamie Thompson. He lived alone in a little log cabin on the side of a hill, above a winding stream that emptied into the Ohio River. No person seemed to know where he came from, or just how long he had lived there. He was known to young and old as just Old Jamie Thompson, and to some as "Ragged" Jamie. His little hut and garden always looked neat and well kept, and the old-fashioned hollyhocks, geraniums and climbing roses which grew in profusion on both sides of his walks were the envy of all passers-by.

If there was ever a person born with love for fishing it was Old Jamie Thompson. Every Sunday, rain or shine, he could be seen with his long cane pole over his shoulder with a big string of bass

or pickerel dangling by a string in his hand, shuffling along the road toward his little shack.

Usually he appeared just at the close of services held in the little brick church on the hill, and was a target for the scornful glances and caustic remarks of the worshipers.

But all their sarcasm was of no avail—Jamie was a fisherman, and as Sunday was the only leisure time he had, he went fishing on that day.

I well remember the first licking I suffered for having committed the terrible sin of playing hooky from Sunday-school and going fishing with Old Jamie. The second and third punishments for the same offense were just as severe, but they failed of results—going fishing with Old Jamie was well worth it. It became a regular Sunday habit with me. He knew where the luscious sweet anise root grew, and the blood root too, which cured warts if it was dug in the dark of the moon, rubbed on the wart and buried in the ground. When the root rotted, the wart withered and disappeared. He was also quite a poet. He knew that:

"Wind in the east, the fish bite least:
Wind in the west, fish bite best:
Wind in the south, bait in fish's mouth."

For wind from the north he didn't seem to have any rule, but no matter from which point of the compass the wind blew, he went fishing and his love for the great open spaces was passed on to me.

He died without disclosing who he was or where he came from. He was not a church-goer; but he was neither profane nor vulgar. I feel his chances at the bar of judgment were just as good as some of those who scorned him in life or maybe a wee bit better. He lies on the sunny slope of the little cemetery which he cared for so studiously in life, at the foot of which winds the little babbling brook he knew and loved so well. Could any one wish a "couch more magnificent"?

Years after his death I searched out his grave, and, unknown to any one, I substituted a neat marble slab for the wooden marker which was fast decaying. The mystery of how that marble stone was placed there is still unsolved by the villagers.

Once a fisherman always a fisherman: so there was nothing unusual in my keeping a complete fishing outfit in the tool kit of the wagon on which I rode and slept while with the circus. Happy Frank who drove always waked me when a promising-looking stream hove in sight, for he knew the

chances were good for a mess of fresh fish to be eaten at breakfast on the next "lot."

When the wagon show became a thing of the past, and the show traveled by rail, the men on the advance cars would advise me at what station I could leave the train, fish down the stream and get into the next "pitch" in time for the parade. If I got hungry, and I usually did, there was always a hospitable farm-house where I could get breakfast in exchange for information about the circus, which unfailingly interested Hiram and Hanner not a little. But sometimes I had to work hard to conceal my identity, when my benefactors were deacons, or elders, for they believed circus men in league with the devil, and I would have been received with about as much cordiality as His Satanic Majesty.

Did I get tired, or fear I would arrive late on the lot, I could always get a "lift" from buggy or wagon en route to see the *"pee*-rade." On one occasion while riding with an old couple, I inadvertently disclosed my identity and was not surprised to catch the old farmer surreptitiously changing his pocketbook, which was "all bound round with a woolen string" to the pocket farthest from me.

On these fishing excursions there were always boys to be met. They were up bright and early to see the circus come in—yes, and girls, too—boys dressed up in their "other" suits, who evidently had permission from their parents to see the circus; boys with ragged trousers held up with one suspender; barefooted, with perhaps a stone bruise on either foot, limping along in happy anticipation of seeing the "hull show." It was easy to see the latter were playing hooky and expected to be "licked" for it. What cared they? Did ever a boy live that at one time or another did not play hooky on circus day? To these boys I would make an offer of passes to the circus if they would show me the good fishing holes. New recruits would be picked up on the way, and the "guides" would generally total about six by the time we came in sight of the main entrance, which would cause old Jim Simpson, who stood gate, to throw up his hands and say, "Here comes that crazy clown, Bob Sherwood, with his fishin' gang."

These chance acquaintances often ripened into warm friendships many of which still continue. From some of my "boys" I get letters regularly, with now and then a picture of the newest son or

daughter enclosed. Last Christmas, one sent me a picture of his grandchild. Quite a few sons have been named Robert—my first name—and some daughters Roberta, the feminine of Robert. All of my boys are now gray-haired, and some have passed into the Great Beyond. Two are bankers, one a ranchman, in the great West, one a senator (although I don't hold that against him) and one has been vice-president of the United States. But wherever they are, no matter how rich and powerful they may be, I feel sure they have not been ashamed to tell their children the story of the old clown who gave them passes to the circus in pay for pointing out the good fishing holes.

On January last I spoke on the old-time circus at a big banquet given by one of the Banker's Associations at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City. At the close of my talk a big well-groomed, prosperous-looking man came up and congratulated me, saying:

"While you were with the circus, did you ever show in ———ville?"

"Why, yes," I replied, "I think I did, but I can't say positively without consulting my old date-books, which, unfortunately, I did not bring with me."

"Well, do you recall playing in a town, in the early 'eighties when a boy of twelve was caught creeping under the canvas, and was being ignominiously led to the door by a burly canvasman; you called to the man to set the boy down by the center-pole and let him see the show, and you saw to it that the boy was plentifully provided with gingerbread, lemonade and pop-corn balls?"

I did faintly recall such an incident, and replied, "Yes, I believe I do."

"Well, I was that boy; my name is John ——, and I've been looking for you ever since."

This man is now at the head of the biggest financial institution in this country and his name is a power to conjure with in the money markets of the world.

The incident so upset me that I could not answer him for a moment. Unmanly as it may seem, a lump came in my throat, and my eyes were moist; not on account of the incident, but its remembrance carried me back to the happiest days of my life—the days of the old one-ring red-wagon show. The Saturday following he carried me off to spend the week-end at his palatial estate in Long Island where we lived over again our boyhood days, when neither had any troubles that sleep would not cure.

I have had many incidents of this sort, and never yet have I known a man who was ashamed of the days when he "carried water to the elephant."

Trust a boy to find a way out. Getting down one morning from the wagon on which I had slept, I struck up an acquaintance with a chubby little curly-haired boy of about twelve. His appearance suggested the belief that he was playing hooky from school and going to the circus. He had on a pair of blue jeans trousers held up by home-made suspenders, a hickory shirt, and was carrying his shoes in his hand, for the reason as he stated, "that he couldn't wear them very long at a time because they hurt the 'stun' bruises on his feet."

"Are you going to the circus?" I inquired.

"Yes, sir," he replied cheerfully. "If I can work my way in."

"Well," I said, while fingering a pass which I had in my pocket, "that won't be very hard. What do you expect to do?"

"I just don't know what I'll do," he replied. "But I bet I do something, if only to carry water for the elephants."

"But," I said, "elephants are big animals and

they drink barrels of water. Perhaps you may have to carry water to them until the circus performance is over."

This information was a poser. He dug his bare toes in the soft earth and wrinkled his brow in deep thought; suddenly his face brightened, and glancing up at me from under a tattered straw hat, he said in a convincing manner, "Well, if he drinks that much I'll ask the man to let me lead him down to the spring."

Can you beat that for assurance and confidence? Here was a lad not even in his teens, barefooted, ragged trousers, poor parents—yet he was determined to get into that circus even if he had to lead a five-ton elephant "down to the spring." He got the pass.

I have heard from him often in the past forty years. Starting life as a poor farmer boy, he has steadily risen to where he is manager and principal owner of the biggest lumber concern in the state of Washington, with more than five hundred men under his direction.

Perhaps when they become disobedient and belligerent he "leads them down to the spring."

CHAPTER XIII

THE KLOWN KIDDIE KLUB

ALTHOUGH very fond of children, my wife and I have never had any of our own. This misfortune drew not a little good-humored raillery from our housekeeper of many years, who seemed to think the situation very humorous. We decided against adoption, fearing the special care of one might lead to the neglect of the many we were looking after.

Next to our sleeping apartment was a large room, in which stood a billiard table. As I never was able to secure an opponent who played as poorly as I, the table was taken down and the room remained vacant for a long time.

The housekeeper one day made the suggestion that she be allowed to redecorate the room and "fix

it up a little." For several weeks after, the apartment was kept locked, and all our inquiries were met with the evasive explanation of "a little surprise." On Christmas Eve we were invited up to the room to view the surprise—and, to put it mildly, we were surprised. The walls were decorated with pictures from Mother Goose with a frieze of Babes in Toyland. In one corner was a white canopied bed, while the floor was literally covered with dolls, kites, tops—in fact almost every kind of toy—a veritable nursery, except the children. The surprise was complete.

For a while I rather rebelled against the joke, but in a short time saw the humor of the situation and whenever I passed a street fakir with a new toy for sale, I bought it and brought it home to the nursery, which gradually took on the aspect of a toy shop.

The news of "Uncle Bob's" nursery began to be noised about the neighborhood, and children began to flock in to play with the toys. Not the least interested or interesting was Susanna, the child of a colored cook.

Eventually the days became altogether too short to satisfy the children, and they began to play

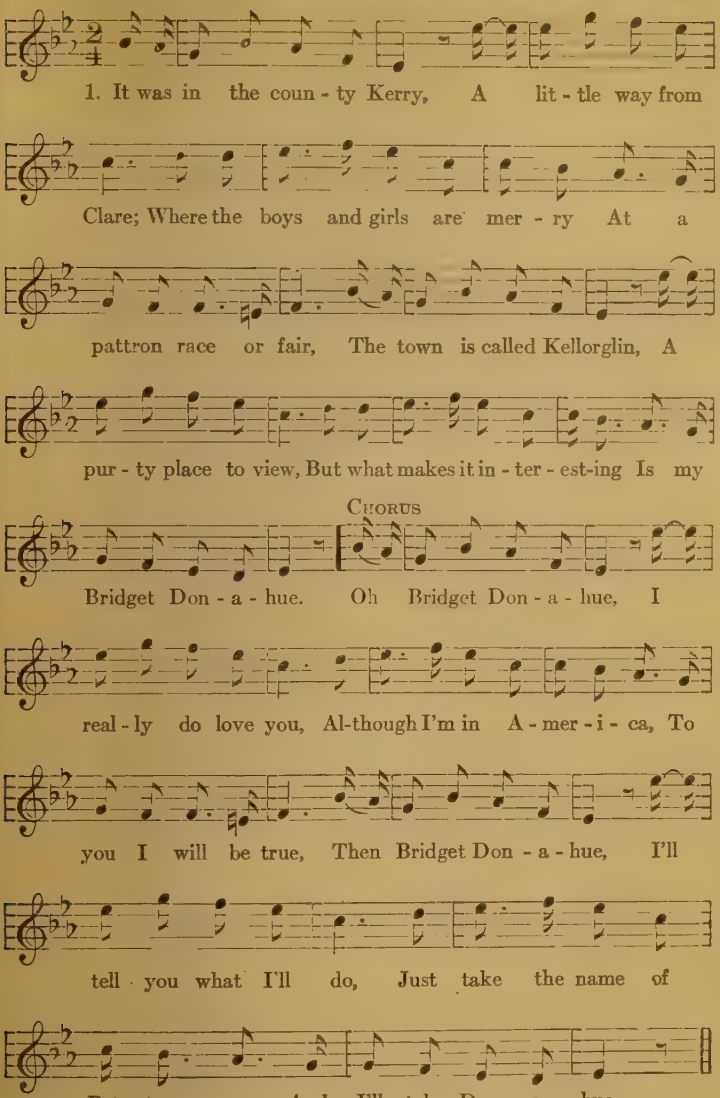
hooky from home and come to the nursery at night. And some even brought their nighties and rolled into bed when sleepy time came—Susanna included. This custom brought no end of telephone calls in the dead of night from agitated parents, anxious to know where their children were. When morning came, our breakfast-room took on the appearance of an orphanage. On these occasions all colors were represented—black, white and yellow. To this our housekeeper made mild objections, which availed her nothing, as she was the cause of the whole thing.

Usually we found them all sound asleep when we looked in after an evening out, but sometimes when I peeped in, the sheets would begin to shiver and shake, and suddenly up would pop a half-dozen curly heads, with much giggling and gleeful shrieks of laughter at the joke they had played in making me think they were asleep.

Then, while they sat on the side of the bed, there must be stories, the telling of which was accented by much twiddling of toes on the part of the audience. If I made the slightest mistake in the recital, I was sure to be interrupted with, "No! Uncle Bob, him did this," or "her did that."

Bridget Donahue

(*Written and sung by* JOHNNY PATTERSON *the Great Irish Clown*)


1. It was in the coun - ty Kerry, A lit - tle way from
Clare; Where the boys and girls are mer - ry At a
pattron race or fair, The town is called Kellorglin, A
pur - ty place to view, But what makes it in - ter - est-ing Is my
CHORUS
Bridget Don - a - hue. Oh Bridget Don - a - hue, I
real - ly do love you, Al-though I'm in A - mer - i - ca, To
you I will be true, Then Bridget Don - a - hue, I'll
tell you what I'll do, Just take the name of
Pat - ter - son And I'll take Don - a - hue.

2 Her father is a farmer,
And a dasent man is he,
He's liked by all the people,
From Kellorglin to Tralee,
And Bridget on a Sunday,
When coming home from mass,
She's admired by all the people,
Sure they wate to see her pass.

CHO.—Oh, Bridget Donahue, &c.

3 I sent her home a picture,
I did upon my word,
Not a picture of myself
But the picture of a Bird;
It was the American Eagle,
And says I, Miss Donahue,
Our Eagles' wings are enough
To shelter me and you,

CHO.—Oh, Bridget Donahue, &c.

And the tale never satisfied unless it ended with "he got up and went home to him's muvver."

Rarely would they consent to retire until they had a song, and I needs must sing until they dropped off in the Land of Nod. Both boys and girls preferred *Grimes's Cellar Door* because the chorus is easy:

> Yes, I would give all my greenbacks,
> For childish days once more,
> When Billy Brown, and I slid down
> Old Grimes's cellar door.

I was one night awakened by an awful scream coming from the nursery. Investigation proved that one little fellow had a nightmare, in which he dreamed he was sliding down the cellar door, and a big splinter stuck into him. So real was the dream, he insisted that it was still there and should be removed.

I finally quieted his fears by explaining how impossible it was for the thing to happen, as cellar doors were no longer made of wood, but of steel and placed flat down—not on an incline, as they were in Billy Brown's day. To this explanation he retorted: "Well, I bet Billy Brown's mother was kept busy picking splinters out of him."

The nursery still carries on, its ranks being recruited from children whose mothers and fathers once played there.

Long before the Ku Klux Klan was revived, we formed the K. K. K., the members being initiated and officers installed in the old billiard room. The letters do not stand for Ku Klux Klan, but Klown Kiddie Klub. Our slogan is "Klowns must laugh, but must not lie." To be caught in a lie means expulsion. As the presiding judge in these cases of complaint, I confess to some slight prevarications on my part in order to protect the culprit at bar.

Some of the questions the court has been called upon to decide would have King Solomon lashed to the mast and howling for mercy. The greatest diplomacy was needed in the case of a little flaxen-haired four-year-old who stoutly maintained she had been followed home from kindergarten by a big yellow lion. On the trial of the action, the prisoner at bar "came clean" and confessed that the "lion" was a large yellow dog. "But it could have been a lion," she stoutly stated in extenuation. Her alibi was accepted, and she was restored to good standing with a slight—a very slight reprimand

from the court. As a matter of fact, she had not intended to lie—she had simply succumbed to a strong imagination in which the dog became a lion.

On Saturday afternoons when the weather is favorable, the members of the Klown Kiddie Klub "don their dots" and go to some orphanage as entertainers. As the crowd is too large for a private car, we usually commandeer some commercial car or truck from the neighborhood, and go in a body. Good fellowship predominates. The children have a lot of fun and are not particular as to cushioned seats or pneumatic tires. One young miss, on arriving home from one of our excursions, was told by her parents to hurry and take off her Klown make-up, as they wished to take her for a ride in their Packard car. They were surprised and puzzled to hear her say she did not care to go. Pressed for the reason for her refusal, she replied, "I don't like to ride in a Packard. If you will go around and get Murphy's flivver truck, I'll go."

A few years ago, I conceived the idea of manufacturing a clown rag doll to be sold on the seats. Raking around among some of my old costume pictures, I came across an old photograph of myself in make-up. From this picture, I had manu-

factured a muslin clown doll easily sewed and stuffed. They had a very fair sale, which would have been better, had not the men felt that it was belittling to their profession to sell an article for girls, and so the sale of the clown dollies had to be withdrawn.

Like many things in life, the by-product was more valuable than the principal. For several years past it has been my custom to take several dozen of the dolls up to Madison Square Garden, when the circus opens its season, and lie in wait in the freak show for the youngsters who come out before the performance is ended. I get acquainted with them by taking them on my knee and telling them stories of the circus of long ago. Then I give them a clown doll with the understanding that they are to write me a letter telling me how they like little "Petie."

I would not take a fortune for the letters I have received from several hundred little girls and boys.

Often they find it difficult to express themselves in words, so they draw funny little cartoons, in an attempt to explain themselves more clearly.

It is superfluous for me to state how interesting these letters are to me. How entrancing to read

of their naive doings, an account of which they have set down in their round handwriting, the letters ending in queer little curley-cues and pothooks, each "i" carefully dotted and every "t" crossed! One can easily frame a mental picture of them while the letters were being laboriously written, every stroke of the pencil emphasized by a brisk nod of their curly heads, and the making of every round "o" accompanied by the roll of a protuberant tongue.

At the bottom of the page, just under the signature, is sure to be a string of x's, which every one knows represents kisses. One little girl of eight always prints a page of them. Perhaps she feels that this is the easiest thing to write, when one has to fill a sheet of note-paper.

Every summer we get together and have a party at the beach, and black, white and yellow, rich and poor, seemingly forget their difference in rank and have a royal good time.

Their letters go into my gloat book and their names into my heart.

The young and frivolous may look on this as senility—perhaps it is—but I feel that, to be happy, old age should look at life through the eyes of

youth. We know that Abraham Lincoln, the great Emancipator, at the most critical stage of the Civil War, when oppressed and down-hearted through criticism from his detractors, was accustomed to steal away to the shop of a near-by toy-maker and there spend an hour or more listening to the prattle of happy children as they called for their mended toys. Nor does history record that Mr. Lincoln was derided for his behavior.

There's *something* in the nomadic life of a circus man, which makes him optimistic throughout his existence. I've been kicked off a freight train in a foreign country, where I couldn't speak the language and was broke and hungry. I have driven a "night hawk" cab when the thermometer was near the zero mark, with no overcoat and wearing summer underwear; I've been shot in the leg; had it broken, and my ribs caved in, yet here I am living in the present with neither regrets for the past, nor fear of the future, but instead a firm conviction that if all *materia medica* were cast into the bottom of the sea, it would be the better for mankind and worse for the fishes. When one is healthy and happy, there's "books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything."

As the sailor goes back to the salty breath and flying spume of the ocean, so goes the circus man back to the life under the billowing white tops—to the crack of the ringmaster's whip and the tang of the tan-bark. Those who never lived among the great brotherhood of dots and spangles of two generations past, can not conceive of its attractions or know how potent is its siren call. Perhaps I, too, may go back. Once bitten by the circus wanderlust, the virus is potent throughout life.

It is barely possible that what seems the call of youth may be only a mild form of senile dementia. If it is that, it is at least a very pleasurable hallucination.

Meanwhile I have the delight of looking back. All it takes to start me on the road of youth is a look at two tiny shinplasters, greasy and grimy with age. And then back I go, back from these book-selling days to the old buffoon life, back to the time when, fifty years ago, I, a cheerful clown, climbed the ring bank, took off my conical hat, flapped my arms and cried, "Here we are again!"

THE END

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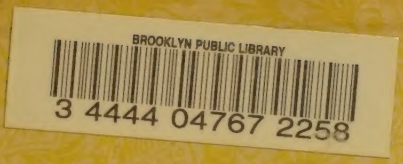

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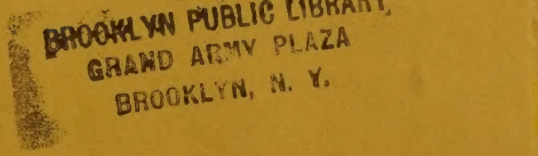

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